Commentary

Volume Eighty, Number Two, August 1985

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Commentary

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Letters from Readers

Aid & AID

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

We in the Agency for International Development (AID) agree entirely with the philosophical underpinnings of Nick Eberstadt's "The Perversion of Foreign Aid" [June], and we respect the thoughtfulness of his previous work. Given that, it is particularly difficult to understand how or why he arrives at his conclusions in the article.

In brief, he is right on the mark in his description of the problems of AID in the past, but he is all wrong when he tries to report what has been done in the last four years.

We have in fact undertaken programs and concentrated our resources in the way Mr. Eberstadt proposes, but he does not recognize that we have done so. For example, we have moved away from the international welfare of a Brandt Commission model and moved toward self-help—exactly the self-sustaining development process he emphasizes in his opening pages.

I am happy to see that Mr. Eberstadt agrees with us that economic policies are the foundation of progress and growth in the less-developed countries (LDC's). But he suggests that we have not been interested in encouraging governments to allow farmers to be paid market prices for their products. I don't know whom Mr. Eberstadt has been talking to, but anyone close to these matters on the Hill or around Washington knows that an agriculture price policy has been a matter of tremendous concentration for AID.

Consider some "bottom-line" examples of what we have actually done with economic policy and the private sector:

1. AID worked with the government of Bangladesh to help it move its fertilizer-distribution system completely out of government bureaucracies and into the private sector. Over 45,000 small Bangladeshi entrepreneurs are now getting fertilizer into the hands of small farmers.

2. AID worked with the government of Pakistan, in Food for Peace negotiations over the last couple of years, to help it move the oilseed (vegetable oil) milling industry out of government bureaucracies and into the private sector. Because vegetable oil is Pakistan's second largest import—roughly a quarter of a billion dollars—this is a very significant, and politically courageous, initiative by the Pakistani government. Our policy-reform counsel and Food for Peace resources have helped the Pakistanis to do it.

3. AID worked with Somalia to help it come to a decision to close down or to sell off several state-owned, "parastatal" corporations. When those bureaucracies are shut down or divested, the private sector will take over—and that is happening right now. Somalia also eliminated all farmgate, wholesale, and retail price controls on banana and sorghum production resulting in a 40-percent increase in the production of these crops.

4. AID worked with Zaire as it moved to abolish some of its agricultural parastatals and to abolish forced sales of food by farmers to government entities at fixed prices. This means that the small farmer can sell to private traders and get whatever price the free market will bring him. Zaire is also abolishing controls that prevented peasants from moving their food around the country into whatever province pays them the most. A Presidential Task Force which AID recommended and managed followed up on these and other issues.

I could go on and on. The point is, there's a story to tell about what AID has been doing in policy reform, and in freeing up private entrepreneurs all over the Third World. The real story is that *this is what we have spent most of our time and energy on in this administration*. Mr. Eberstadt didn't tell that story because apparently he didn't know it. The impression he left with your readers is that we are doing none of this, and that impression could simply not be more wrong. We have worked hard, and we have had quite a few successes.

The Brandt Commission and others did emphasize that continuing widespread poverty in the Third World can lead to political instability. This instability, if it threatens LDC governments friendly to us, could threaten our interests as well. I am surprised that Mr. Eberstadt labels that truism as a "threat," rather than the simple fact that it is. Richard Nixon em-

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phasized it, Henry Kissinger emphasized it in presenting his Presidential Commission's report on Central America, and Ronald Reagan has emphasized it. However, I have said repeatedly that the Brandt Commission's emphasis on resource transfers to LDC's is the wrong answer to the problem.

Mr. Eberstadt attacks "Basic Human Needs" (BHN) as the focus of development and attacks us for continuing the emphasis on BHN. Well, I am proud that we as a nation still have the *goal* of helping the poor peasants in LDC's, and the President is proud of our national idealism too—as he emphasized in announcing our billion-dollar package of famine relief for Africa. There is no reason we should be ashamed that our idealism has continued over the years through Mr. Reagan's administration. The President's view on this is just a reflection of the view of the American people.

Ideals and *goals*, however, are a very different thing from *strategy*. We have maintained the continuity of BHN as a *goal*, but since I came to AID, we have rejected BHN as a *strategy*. BHN as a strategy implemented during the late 1970's essentially said, "Forget national-level policy reform, and just concentrate on getting the social services delivered at the local community level." We believe that kind of strategy accomplishes nothing of lasting significance at the LDC national level, and that in fact it does not help most small farmers in most LDC's. We have focused on policy reform, on the use of market forces, on institution-building, on science-and-technology, and have abandoned the Carter-era BHN as a means. We have focused on growth and jobs as the way to provide income to poor people so they can buy their own food and medicine.

The proof of the pudding is that the ambitious Reagan-administration agenda *has been working* to stimulate growth and change in Third World countries—and therefore in helping them *actually to achieve* the BHN goals.

Mr. Eberstadt is right on target in arguing that the land-reform program in El Salvador needs to evolve from central control of bank credit and of farm production into private, mostly farmer, control. Indeed, that is exactly what we have been arguing to the government of El Salvador. I was recently quoted in a national publication as describing the program as a "political success" in mobilizing farmer support for President Duarte and against the Communist guerrillas:

> Land reform is a key factor in putting together the political forces for a democratic government. . . . But, in fact, the thing that needs to be done now is that you need a greater role for the individual.
>
> . . . The collective farms that have been put together need to be structured quite differently (with title going to individual owners). I have talked to [President] Duarte about this over a period of time. . . . While it has accomplished its political purposes over the first few years, important changes need to be made if it is going to accomplish its economic purposes.

Mr. Eberstadt says much the same thing himself in his article,

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but then depicts me as supporting opposing views. Apparently we agree.

There are quite a few other bones that I could pick with the Eberstadt article. John F. Kennedy was right, for instance, in stressing the "threat" (attributed to me by Mr. Eberstadt) that Third World peasant poverty poses to political stability, and therefore to our own political interests. Economic development *is* related to effective counterinsurgency, and the fact that it has not always worked doesn't mean that we should give it up now in other countries. That is, in fact, precisely the point that the Kissinger Commission made about the need for economic assistance to Central America.

And that is what President Reagan believes. That is why the administration has supported congressional passage of the Jackson plan of economic aid, implementing the Kissinger report. That is why, in several countries all over the world, the President has directed us to put together packages of economic assistance and humanitarian refugee relief to support "democratic revolutions" against Communist repression. We have a moral obligation to continue such support. This administration is committed to that moral obligation, and we won't shrink from the task just because there are problems. That is a counsel of despair which Mr. Eberstadt puts forward, and we don't buy it.

So we think Mr. Eberstadt's premises are correct; it is his conclusions that are wrong. Foreign aid in this administration has a private-sector and self-help orientation. They are pronounced and clear. We have put foreign aid together with American foreign policy—even as we have unabashedly continued to fulfill the humanitarian purposes of AID. We are proud of what we have done, and Mr. Eberstadt should be too—because it is exactly what he says we should have done.

M. PETER MCPHERSON
The Administrator
Agency for International
Development
Washington, D.C.

NICK EBERSTADT writes:

I thank M. Peter McPherson for his kind words about my studies, and about the overall thrust of the article which has prompted him to write. If I read his letter correctly, our disagreement appears to center upon only a small portion of my article. That portion described the performance of AID since 1981, the year in which he became its administrator.

To judge by his letter, Mr. McPherson does not seem to be fully aware either of the actions which the foreign-aid apparatus under his direction has been taking or of the impact of these actions on the peoples in poor and distant lands whose governments receive AID assistance. If Mr. McPherson will bear with me, I will attempt to correct some of the misapprehensions of fact in his letter, to explain some of the misinterpretations he seems to have made in reading my article, and to suggest some of the ways in which AID might be transformed from its present condition into an institution whose overall impact on the prospects for development in the poorer regions of the earth would be unambiguously positive.

Mr. McPherson calls attention to what he feels have been AID's abiding efforts, under his aegis, to promote policy reform in the Third World. He states that this is the area to which he, and his agency, have devoted most of their time and energy since 1981. Mr. McPherson's memory may be playing tricks on him. If he were to check back over his speeches, as published in the Department of State *Bulletin* (the official monthly record of United States foreign policy), he would see that his first mention there of the possibility of involving AID in policy reform in the LDC's did not occur until March 1983—the beginning of his third year of leadership at AID. In the *Bulletin*, it was not until March 1984—the start of his fourth year as AID administrator—that Mr. McPherson, in an official statement to the Senate Appropriations Committee, indicated that policy reform was an area of specific agency concern.

It would be unreasonable to expect an administrator supervising the expenditure of billions of dollars in development funds to be familiar with the precise details of each and every project for which he is, ultimately, responsible. It might be helpful, therefore, to focus on the specifics of some of the cases which have evidently been presented to Mr. McPherson as examples of agricultural-policy reform during his tenure in office.

Contrary to what Mr. McPherson may have been told, Bangladesh's shift in fertilizer-distribution policy has not moved the "system completely out of government bureaucracies and into the private sector." The production, import, and wholesaling of fertilizer in Bangladesh remain areas of government dominance and/or monopoly; the policy shift to which he refers affects only the *retailing* of fertilizer. Even here, the changes may be less dramatic than Mr. McPherson seems to believe: government distributorships have not been eliminated but merely reduced in number, from over 400 to about 90 at present. And although Mr. McPherson's informants may have told him otherwise, this policy shift is not the result of efforts initiated during his tenure in office. AID-Bangladesh dialogue on precisely this policy shift began in the late 1970's, under the Carter administration.

Mr. McPherson appears to be under the impression that his policy-reform program has contributed to the divestiture of state corporations in Somalia. Three small government-owned agricultural corporations in Somalia have indeed closed; these money-losers, however, had apparently all gone out of business by early 1981—long before Mr. McPherson announced his interest in policy reform. (I say apparently because I am relying here on the account of Elliott Berg, widely acknowledged to be one of the leading authorities on policy problems in Africa, who happened to visit Somalia in the summer of 1982; very little information about Somali "parastatals" is available either in the West or in Somalia itself.) Mr. McPherson may have been told that banana and sorghum production in Somalia has increased by 40 percent since 1981, but he should know that there is no way of proving—or disproving—this claim. The capabilities of the statistical system in Somalia are indicated by the fact that it is one of the few nations on earth never even to have conducted a national census of population.

Mr. McPherson seems to believe that AID is responsible for agricultural liberalization in Zaire. There may be much to commend AID activities in Zaire, so I hope it will not seem ungracious to point out that the fundamentals of the decontrol strategy implemented by the Zairean government originally appeared in a World Bank study

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published in April 1980 (*Zaire: Current Economic Situation and Constraints*). Pressure to enact the reforms the World Bank study suggested may have come from many quarters, including AID, but it was the reluctance of the Bretton Woods institutions—the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank—to commit new funds to Zaire in the absence of changes of operating procedures in Kinshasa that created the "climate" in which Zairean officials finally came to find the prospect of policy reform compelling. And while it is well to hope for the best for Zaire's farmers, Mr. McPherson should have been informed that the notion of Zairean peasants "moving their food around the country into whatever province pays them the most" is somewhat fanciful. The breakdown of both public safety and transportation/communciation that has occurred in Zaire over the past two decades has made interprovincial marketing a risky and expensive business.

Though I personally am unaware of the details of AID's policy-reform efforts in the Pakistani oilseed industry, and have as yet been unable to find any written account of their results, I am happy to take Mr. McPherson's word that these constitute a resounding success. More than that, I sincerely hope that they have been a success. AID currently sponsors more than 1,500 projects in poor nations around the world; the possibility that not even one of the projects in which AID takes special pride has lived up in actuality to its official description would be too tragic to contemplate.

It should give Mr. McPherson pause to consider how peripheral the initiatives he discusses are to the overall thrust of American development-assistance efforts in recent years. None of the nations, let alone the projects, which his letter describes has been the focus of America's major foreign-aid funding in its region. For Africa (or, if you will, Asia), America's major foreign-aid commitment is to Egypt; in the Western Hemisphere, its major commitment is to El Salvador.

As every student of public policy will appreciate, it is a rare event which can bring a roomful of economists to a consensus. I believe, however, that I am safe in stating that there is no serious observer of the Egyptian economy, whatever his ideological perspective, who does not acknowledge the serious and costly nature of the distortions which official policies impose upon agriculture, industry, and services in that nation. It is, moreover, virtually a consensus view among economists who specialize in Egypt that the economic irrationality of Egypt's policies has, to say the least, not diminished in recent years. Food subsidies alone, for example, now cost Egypt an estimated 5-7 percent of its GNP; foreign visitors now remark that it is commonplace to see peasant farmers buying loaves of bread for their chickens, since bread is today a considerably cheaper source of feed than unprocessed wheat.

Mr. McPherson is in a better position than I to assess AID's recent contributions to policy reform in Egypt, but he should know that the reports which filter back to the United States through nongovernmental channels are not encouraging. AID, for example, has made a major commitment to electrification in Egypt. Egypt's government-owned electricity companies, by common consensus of domestic and foreign observers, sell electricity at uneconomically low prices, thereby contributing to serious financial losses to the government, widespread inefficiency of energy use, and recurrent electricity shortages and blackouts. At the beginning of what is known as the Ismailia III project, AID insisted that it would commit funds only if Egypt moved up electricity prices to a more economically justifiable level. Whatever the intricacies of these negotiations, the results were unambiguous: Egypt got the AID money, and the price of electricity did not change.

If I read Mr. McPherson's letter correctly, he now agrees with my argument that the economic policies sponsored in El Salvador by AID during his years as administrator have been prejudicial to the economic welfare and social liberties of the people of that small country. There is now hope, perhaps, that some of the damage done to the Salvadoran people by those ill-conceived policies may now be countermanded. But while we may take heart from what Mr. McPherson implies will be a reversal of AID's recent "development" policies in El Salvador, we must also wonder why it has taken AID so long to recognize the economic and social consequences of the policies it has been sponsoring there. In July 1983, more than two years ago, Rufus Waters, at the time chief economist of AID, prepared an analysis of the impact of AID's land-reform program on El Salvador; its conclusions were essentially the same as those in my article, with which Mr. McPherson now says he agrees. Mr. Waters's paper prompted no policy changes. According to Mr. Waters, however, it did attract attention. As he recollects events, a senior AID official instructed him to retrieve all copies of the analysis, and told him that "the existence of that paper must be forgotten."

Two of Mr. McPherson's apparent misunderstandings in his reading of my article deserve special comment. Mr. McPherson appears to have taken my criticism of the "Basic Human Needs" thrust in AID policy as an indication that I am unconcerned with the plight of poor peasants and poor families in the lands to which we extend development assistance. I confess I remain puzzled by this interpretation. The point of my article was that America's present foreign-aid policies fail to translate effectively our people's compassion into results for the needy and the unprotected overseas; AID's BHN approach to development assistance, I argued, is one of the proximate factors in this more overarching failure.

At one point in his letter, Mr. McPherson states that he agrees with me that BHN is a flawed strategic instrument with which to prosecute development in low-income nations. If Mr. McPherson does indeed believe this, I would encourage him to lobby for the rescinding of the so-called New Directions legislation of the early 1970's; though his Agency Counsel may not have emphasized the point to him, the fact is that those laws commit AID, to this very day, to pursue BHN-type development policies. And while it may only be a stylistic oversight, I suspect that Mr. McPherson might wish to qualify the statement in his letter that he supports the "ideals" of BHN.

Like the Brandt Commission recommendations and other strategies with a similar approach to "development planning," BHN concerns itself with the alleviation of *physical* poverty—nothing more. Surely this is an imperfect formulation of the ideal of "development."

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To my way of thinking, development involves the extension of human choice—and thus speaks not only to the issue of physical poverty, but to the issues of political freedom and individual liberty. Most Americans, I am sure, would endorse this more balanced definition of "development." I have no doubt that, upon reflection, Mr. McPherson too would endorse this formulation of the ideals underlying American development assistance.

On the theme of counterinsurgency, Mr. McPherson seems to have concluded that I offered a "counsel of despair" and a plea for American noninvolvement in problem regions of the Third World. I cannot see how such an interpretation suggests itself. My article emphasized the fact that U.S. "security assistance" (including resources for augmenting counterinsurgency activities) was highly successful in the 1950's. And there have been successful applications of security-assistance funding in the years since then as well. My point, which I thought could not be mistaken, was that the United States made, and continues to make, a crucial error in subordinating development-assistance funds to the tasks of security assistance, since the criteria by which development assistance and security assistance are evaluated must radically differ from one another.

The factors underlying political instability in poor nations—or for that matter, in rich nations—are varied and often enormously complex; suffice it to say, however, that current intellectual fashions notwithstanding, widespread poverty is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for internal unrest or political decay. Turning development-assistance funds to the purpose of political pacification, I would submit, is a perilous undertaking, for it raises the possibility that such "investments" will be inexorably debased, until they reach the lowest common denominator of refugee-relief ministrations. Failure to recognize this danger is in my opinion one of the more serious shortcomings of the Kissinger Commission report, which seems actually to recommend regionalizing the development policies AID has recently been experimenting with in El Salvador.

In the early 1950's—perhaps their period of greatest efficacy—the development-assistance and security-assistance programs were kept separate. We would be wise to keep these programs separate today. The United States should never fear to extend its help to governments and peoples who need it, but to provide such help effectively we simply cannot afford to mistake the tools needed for any given job.

Lest Mr. McPherson feel my judgment of AID's recent performance is too harsh, I wish to emphasize that I do *not* believe that a thoroughgoing reform of that agency is a hopeless task, or one unworthy of the effort. In other writings (for example, "Restoring Purpose to American Foreign Aid," in the Heritage Foundation volume, *U.S. Aid to the Developing World: A Free-Market Agenda*) I have outlined in some detail the sorts of structural, strategic, and intellectual changes which would be necessary if AID (or some successor institution) were to contribute more positively to the promotion of development in LDC's, to bring foreign-aid policies into greater consonance with our overall foreign-policy objectives, and to bring our development-assistance strategies to reflect the values and preferences of the American people more accurately.

Among the specific changes which might be required for an overall restoration of purpose to U.S. development assistance are: the rescinding of the so-called New Directions legislation; the elimination of the superstructure which has drawn AID out of the direct State Department chain of command; the removal of all security-assistance funds from AID administration; the radical reform of the Food for Peace program (which is, in actuality, a surplus commodity-disposal program for the primary benefit of U.S. farmers); the orderly termination of AID social-service programs in the Third World; and the augmentation of American technical-assistance capabilities, which have been significantly depleted since the enactment of the New Directions legislation. Most important of all, it would be necessary to develop a basic policy-analysis capacity for the U.S. development-assistance apparatus, in the hope that this might eventually be upgraded to the point where governments genuinely interested in serious policy or managerial reform might seek American advice—without fear of its consequences in the field.

Nuclear Education

To the Editor of Commentary:

Joseph Adelson and Chester E. Finn, Jr., in their attack on "nuclear education" ["Terrorizing Children," April], miss the boat on two major issues; on several others they either contradict themselves or confuse the facts.

First of all, the primary purpose of "peace education" (a preferable and more inclusive term than the syntactically misleading "nuclear education") is not to "terrorize" students but rather to prepare them for responsible political participation in a world in which all-out war can no longer be considered a viable alternative for settling international disputes.

The form peace education takes depends on the ages of the children involved, a crucial factor of which Messrs. Adelson and Finn make virtually no mention—a particularly surprising omission given Mr. Adelson's own extensive research on the development of political thinking in adolescents. Peace education for children in the elementary grades can include learning about peaceable ways to settle disputes among themselves without resorting to violence, learning respect and care for each other and for the environment—both immediate and worldwide—and learning to accept and value differences among people.

In junior high and high school, students, on the verge of adulthood, need to engage with real-life, often controversial, complex, sometimes even frightening, issues which have direct bearing on their lives, such as the arms race and nuclear weapons. Messrs. Adelson and Finn specifically criticize a "New York City social-studies unit" that "has students appraise the wisdom and morality of Truman's decision to drop the bomb. . . ." The question of whether Truman should or should not have ordered the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 is a particularly useful subject for classroom discussion with older students; it is educational in the best sense since there is no easy right or wrong answer, strong arguments can be made on both sides, and the moral questions the subject gives rise to are still relevant to present-day policies and tactical decisions. High-school students, after all, are not being asked actually to make decisions, simply to cut their political teeth by considering important

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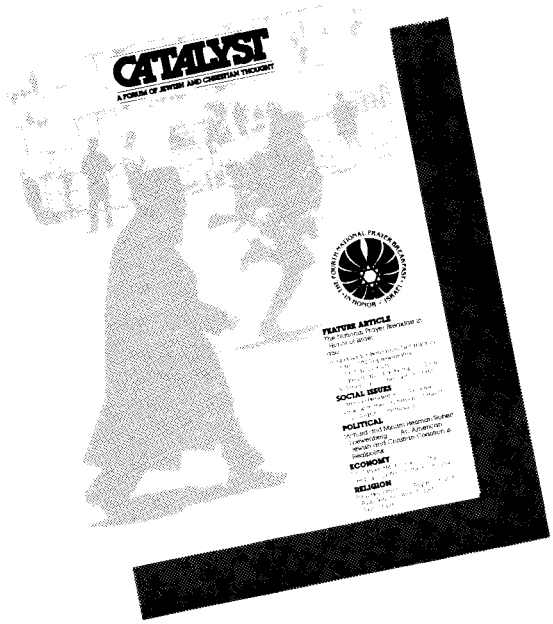

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questions—yes, questions which "threaten the very survival of mankind." Messrs. Adelson and Finn's statement that these are "exceedingly complicated matters that even the experts find difficult" has a familiar and somewhat ominous ring. The implication that thinking about such matters is best left to experts seems to us dangerous and profoundly undemocratic.

Secondly, the question of the pervasiveness among young people of the fear of nuclear war has been misconstrued in the article. Fear of nuclear war is neither far-fetched nor neurotic. It is what psychologists describe as "reality-based." And even the authors of the article make passing reference to "the realistic apprehension all of us share." If all of us share it, why not the children, or at least some of them?

No, we don't know how pervasive the fear is, how intense, how destructive, how many children are affected, and from what background they come. Probably the evidence which would best satisfy the authors because of its orthodox methodology and because it can't be seen as politically motivated is the work done by Jerald G. Bachman. In one volume of a 10-volume study on adolescence, Bachman found that between 1976 and 1982 there was a rise from 7 percent to 31 percent of the nationwide sample of high-school students surveyed who said they often worried about the nuclear threat.

Statistics about feelings, however, in addition to being difficult to interpret or evaluate, may not, in this case, be all that crucial. From our own experience with children, from the disinterested research which does exist, and from the logic of the situation, we have a pretty good idea that many children are fearful —enough to make it important for adults at least to be aware of the possibility so they can recognize anxiety about nuclear war when it does appear and attempt to deal with it as best they can. Denying either the existence or legitimacy of people's strong feelings, particularly children's, can be very damaging, as Messrs. Adelson and Finn must know.

A few additional points:

Messrs. Adelson and Finn base a good deal of their criticism on the "abuse of science" they see in current research and testimony about young people's fears of nuclear war: "Most of the 'scientists' are in truth not scientists at all." "Most of [the evidence] is unacceptably soft, consisting of anecdotes rather than data." On the other hand, they give strong praise to Robert Coles for his "clear-headedness"—which suggests that interview evidence ("soft evidence") sits well enough with them when the findings are to their liking.

Messrs. Adelson and Finn, equating nonbelligerence with nonresistance (although they are clearly not at all the same), believe the new curricula "encourage youngsters to be passive about their own survival. . . ." They admit, however, with some puzzlement and a good deal of dismay, that the curricula somehow also encourage political action. Yet part of education for citizenship (once called "civics") has always been to encourage political action: learning to express your views; write to your Senator; do research on current events and reach independent conclusions; debate political opinions and national policy and hold mock elections—in short, learning how to develop your own views and make those views known. Peace education has much the same purposes with more focus on the dangers of military solutions and more emphasis on finding "new ways of thinking," to paraphrase Einstein's famous cautionary statement.

Though it has been difficult to respond to Messrs. Adelson and Finn's article in a voice of reason and restraint, we have resisted the temptation to slip into the tone of brutal sarcasm, insinuation, and contempt they employ, in the interest of bringing some clarity to a subject with which we all must be concerned. (It seems particularly odd for two professionals who take a strong positivist stand on science and scientific methods to use such highly colored, hyperbolic language.)

Finally, we suggest that the authors of "Terrorizing Children" might have done better to read for themselves the Cambridge School Committee's order rather than relying on the capsule report of it in the *Wall Street Journal* ("the school board requires teachers to cover peace and nuclear war from kindergarten through 12th grade"). The actual order, favorably voted on by the Committee in April 1981, asks the School Department and the Superintendent of Schools to "initiate and work with community groups to develop an appropriate peace curriculum throughout the grades that supports children's and young people's understanding of the history, scientific background, economics, and politics of waging peace in a nuclear age." In our view, the order describes a reasonable, broadly conceived approach to peace education, certainly not one designed to "terrorize children."

ELEANOR DUCKWORTH,
BRENDA S. ENGEL,
BETH LERMAN,
PEGGY SCHIRMER,
VICKY STEINITZ
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Terrorizing Children," Robert Jay Lifton, among others, is faulted for abusing psychiatry and psychoanalysis for politically motivated reasons—specifically, for showing intellectual bad faith and corrupting his scientific and professional values in the interest of furthering his missionary cause, which is to attempt to prove . . . that there is general and widespread anxiety about the possibility of nuclear war among the nation's children.

I am in agreement with the authors in their criticism of Dr. Lifton. Recently I reported on a similar abuse of psychiatry in the Soviet Union. This involved the dean of Soviet psychiatry, Andrei Snezhnevsky, and his theories of "sluggish schizophrenia." Snezhnevsky's sloppy and uncritical thinking and failure to use minimal scientific controls are very much like what Messrs. Adelson and Finn ascribe to Dr. Lifton. In the Soviet Union, Snezhnevsky's abuse of his profession has provided the cloak of respectability for the inhuman suppression of political dissent via unwarranted psychiatric hospitalization of dissenters. This—the end result of politicizing one's profession—is a lesson that Dr. Lifton would do well to take to heart.

But that is not the only point I wish to make.

Dr. Lifton is identified in the article as a psychoanalyst. He is not, and it is no service to our profession to burden us with Dr. Lifton's sins. I say this with some regret, because I know him personally. I have checked Dr. Lifton's credentials as a psychoanalyst carefully to be sure of my facts, and have come across some curious findings. It appears that Dr. Lifton may have contributed to the confusion about whether or not he is a psychoana-

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lyst by the way he lists himself in professional directories.

Robert Jay Lifton is certainly a most eminent figure in psychiatry, and holds a high university chair. The *Directory of Medical Specialists*, however, the major reference for professional identification in all of the medical specialties, including psychiatry, has no listing for him. . . .

Consulting the rosters of the American Psychoanalytic Association and my own organization, the American Academy of Psychoanalysis, the two major national organizations of medically-trained psychoanalysts, I find he is not listed as a member of either. He is, however, listed as a "Scientific Associate" of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis. This is a non-voting category—entirely separate from the voting members and fellows—and includes a number of scientists and others in fields allied to psychoanalysis. Membership is restricted to physicians who are psychoanalytically trained according to criteria laid down in the by-laws of the organization. Dr. Lifton did not qualify under those standards, and was admitted only as a "Scientific Associate" under a section which applies to "psychiatrists who are versed in the dynamics of behavior."

Looking further for Dr. Lifton's credentials, I consulted the most recent edition (1977) of the *Biographical Directory* of the American Psychiatric Association with data about Dr. Lifton available to me (he is not listed in the current, i.e., 1983 edition). In that volume, Dr. Lifton—who submitted the biographical material which is included and is solely responsible for its accuracy—is shown to have had psychoanalytic training in Boston, although it is not clear whether he completed that training. He is not listed as a member of any local psychoanalytic society. He is listed, however, as: "Member, American Academy of Psychoanalysis." . . .

I know from personal experience with Dr. Lifton (I included one of his papers in a volume that I edited) that he would prefer to be known not as a psychoanalyst but as a writer and psychohistorian. He is one of the founders of that field (the validity of which is yet to be established, it should be noted), and so I prefer to think that Dr. Lifton was somehow confused about his status in the Academy, and not misrepresenting himself as an accredited psychoanalyst.

But a consequence of Dr. Lifton's misidentifying himself . . . is that by so doing he has implicated the Academy in his politically motivated activity. Without scientific legitimacy, he lays, however unwittingly, the protective mantle of psychoanalysis over his political beliefs and actions.

Thus, though Messrs. Adelson and Finn justly criticize Dr. Lifton, they are in error in considering him a psychoanalyst. . . . I agree with their valid criticism that psychiatrists and psychoanalysts should be very cautious in draping their professional cloak over matters outside their clinical experience.

SEYMOUR C. POST, M.D.
Department of Psychiatry
College of Physicians and Surgeons
of Columbia University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Witty skepticism is a fine thing for those among us fortunate enough to have reached a venerable middle age. At an informal gathering of Yale students last year, I asked the kids who truly believed that they would live long enough to have grandchildren to raise their hands: out of forty young people, two raised their hands, thought for a moment, then lowered them. The rest didn't have to think about it: they didn't move.

We are not innocents in the woods, nor duped, nor brainwashed, nor hysterical. We are a generation that, rationally and realistically, concedes that it is dangerous to permit ourselves the luxury of what may be the ultimate delusion, the luxury that Messrs. Adelson and Finn's generation took for granted: that we would see our children live long enough to give birth; that we would see this world with the eyes of old age, with faith that it would survive us. It is no small thing that has been taken from us; I think we need not be apologists for our just rage.

NAOMI WOLF
[Rhodes Scholar-Elect]
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I felt a great sense of relief when I read "Terrorizing Children." I am sure there are many others in the teaching profession who join me in thanking the authors for badly needed ammunition to use against the disgracefully simplistic and biased "nuclear curricula" we see on the horizon.

It used to be said in the military that there are few things more dangerous than a new second lieutenant with a fountain pen; he will sign anything, for he does not yet understand the responsibility that goes with his position. That adage can now be extended to include Yale and Harvard psychoanalysts.

JOHN S. HOLLINGSHEAD
Silver Spring, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"Terrorizing Children" should be welcomed by parents and educators who have tried to resist the ministrations of nuclear education. It has been my experience that parents can successfully resist the kinds of situations described by Joseph Adelson and Chester E. Finn, Jr., even in a city like mine, that has declared itself a nuclear-free zone.

In the fall of 1983, when my daughter was in first grade, I received a notice that the third, fourth, and fifth grades were going to be shown a film, *Bombs Will Make the Rainbows Break*, in conjunction with a "peace week" sponsored by Educators for Social Responsibility. I called the principal to express my concern on psychological and political grounds and was asked to write a letter outlining my position, as were other parents who had called to complain.

The principal, after previewing the film with some of the teachers and a psychologist, decided it would not be shown. He justified his decision on grounds similar to the points made by Messrs. Adelson and Finn: (1) the film instilled a sense of hopelessness and depression; (2) the film was propaganda.

One small victory will hardly stop continuing efforts on the part of the National Education Association and Educators for Social Responsibility to politicize the treatment of defense issues in the schools. But one can hope that parents and educators determined to resist this trend will be spurred to action by the sensible insights provided by Messrs. Adelson and Finn.

LAWRENCE KOHN
Madison, Wisconsin

JOSEPH ADELSON and CHESTER E. FINN, JR. write:

Initially we were told by the nuclear-education movement that the nation's young were in a mental-health crisis—anomie, despair, suicide, psychic numbing, nuclear nightmares—a crisis of such ur-

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gency that their terrors could be repaired only by the schools' becoming vast therapeutic agencies. In fact, the mental health of the young has been improving, albeit slightly (see below), so that balloon has burst, and now we learn from the letter of Eleanor Duckworth, Brenda S. Engel, Beth Lerman, Peggy Schirmer, and Vicky Steinitz that nuclear education is to be renamed, and offered to us as an instrument of democratic pedagogy. In short, the essentially political aims of nuclear teaching, so plainly evident to anyone reading the proposed curricula, are once again to be disguised and their intentions dissembled.

A friend of one of us says he was inspired by our article to draft his own curriculum, and it is worth hearing about, since it provides what the critic Kenneth Burke once termed "perspective by incongruity," that is, a way of renewing our vision through unexpected juxtapositions. This friend believes, passionately, that the most important domestic issue facing our country is abortion, which he calls "baby-murder." There are, he will tell you, well over a million such homicides each year, carried out on the innocent and helpless. The abortion carnage, as he terms it, is real and continuing, and of far greater moral urgency than an entirely hypothetical nuclear carnage. So he is determined to develop what he calls a "life" curriculum, which would extend, as the Cambridge curriculum does, from kindergarten to the twelfth grade. In the early years, children would be instructed on the sanctity of human life, but as they grew older, they would be encouraged to confront some grim realities. They would, for example, be shown vivid color photographs of twenty-week-old aborted fetuses; they would hear testimony from former employees of abortion clinics about some of the horrors they had witnessed; they would see screenings of *The Silent Scream*. To bring home the magnitude of the abortion peril, they would be given ingenious mathematical exercises; for example, they would be told to draw graphs depicting the annual number of murdered babies in their own community, in the state, and nationally. There would be workshops where children would be encouraged to make public their hidden feelings about abortion; as Duckworth *et al.* remind us, some concerns are reality-based, and with over a million murdered babies a year, children will be worried "enough to make it important for adults at least to be aware of the possibility so they can recognize anxiety . . . when it does appear and attempt to deal with it as best they can." Particular attention would be given to those children who seem to be indifferent about abortion, for it is likely that they suffer from psychic numbing. Students would be told to write letters on the matter to their elected representatives—as the Cambridge letter tells us, that is part of "education for citizenship."

One somehow suspects that Duckworth *et al.* will not be overjoyed by this proposal, but on what grounds can they oppose it? They want to have children "cut their political teeth" on "real-life, often controversial" issues; and so does our friend. Their goal—a world at peace—is a virtuous one; but so is his—the preciousness of human life. They want to allay the unspoken anxieties of children, as does he. And if they were to argue that "life education" is no more than propaganda pretending otherwise, the same can be said for "peace education." In short, the case to be made for and against each curriculum is essentially the same. Finding a place for peace education will mean, sooner rather than later, finding a place for life education or choice education, or for any other curriculum whose sponsors are eager to use the schools to teach its doctrine, whether in the cause of mental health or democratic education or whatever. Come to think of it, if we are to have peace education, *à la* Duckworth *et al.*, what is to keep us from having peace education *à la* Phyllis Schlafly, let us say—like the rest of us, she favors peace, fears nuclear war, and has strong ideas on how to avoid one. If the advocates of nuclear education were not so insular, they would realize that there are many other determined voices waiting to be heard, and if you offer a platform to one, you offer it to all, at great cost to general education. It surpasses understanding why the schools and journals of education cannot grasp that simple fact.

On some of the other issues raised in the Cambridge letter: (1) We know the Bachman findings quite well, and do not consider them germane to the question of nuclear anxiety, for reasons we spelled out in great detail in the original article. (2) We did not treat the problem of "age-appropriateness" in detail because of a lack of space, and because the nuclear curricula have far more serious faults. But since the matter is raised, let us say that most of those we have examined appear to have been composed without regard to fitting the material taught to the cognitive capacities of the students. One of us, in fact, offered written testimony on that very issue to the House Select Committee, and that statement is available in the Committee proceedings. (3) We are not "positivists," whatever that may mean, and we did not impose exalted standards on the "evidence" we examined. What has been provided to the Committee and to the public is not "research" but a travesty of it and, what is even worse, "research" entirely tendentious in intention. (4) We are all in favor of reason and restraint, and regret that more of it was not evident in most of the testimony offered to the House Committee. To characterize the young as a whole as enraged, cynical, despairing, suicidal, and the like strikes us as "hyperbolic" almost by definition, and beyond that, entirely false, to judge by every bit of reliable evidence we have. It does not help matters when that fiction is then linked to an equally fictive epidemic of nuclear anxiety. The epidemiological evidence shows quite clearly that psychological pathology among the young, including the suicide rate, has been declining, and it is irresponsible for putative mental-health professionals to seek a public forum while being unaware of that evidence or choosing to ignore it.

Which brings us to Robert Jay Lifton, and in turn to Seymour C. Post. We would not have believed it possible, but Dr. Post's letter left us in complete sympathy with Dr. Lifton. Dr. Post seems bent on becoming the Torquemada of psychotherapeutic credentialism, e.g., he recently sent a letter to the New York *Times* taking Sigmund Freud to task for having had Anna Freud trained in psychoanalysis. He ought to remember that "psychoanalyst" is not an official title, that a great many training institutions confer that designation quite legitimately, and that it is not up to him to determine by fiat just who is and is not a psychoanalyst.

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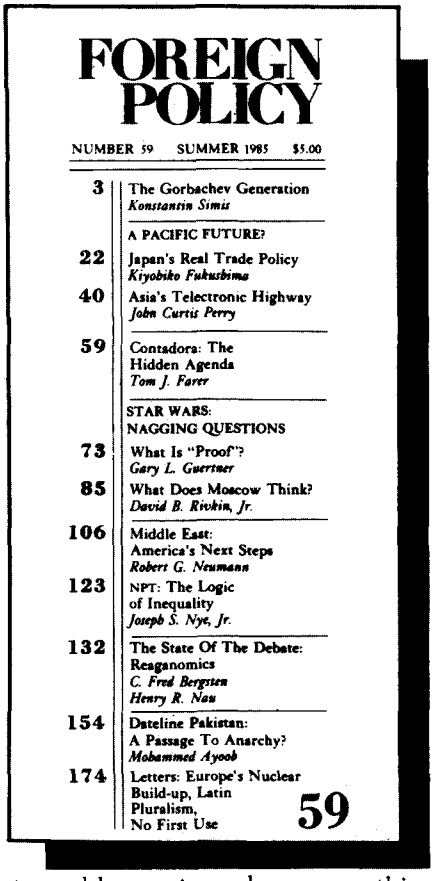
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To the Rhodes Scholar-elect, who gazes in the mirror, sees herself and forty Yalies, and believes she sees a generation, we recommend the following mantra: "My generation voted overwhelmingly for Ronald Reagan. *My* generation."

We want to express our appreciation to John S. Hollingshead and Lawrence Kohn, and to many others who commented favorably on the article.

Finally, the crescendo of nuclear education continues to swell. Since we wrote our article, another major organization of educators (the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) has given over much of its magazine to a profoundly one-sided treatment of these matters; the Oregon legislature has voted to encourage "peace studies" in the schools of the entire state; and the Los Angeles Board of Education has done the same for its tens of thousands of students. We were not, in short, merely chronicling past events or depicting a static situation. Indeed, we expect that worse lies ahead.

Fundamentalism

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his brilliantly written and basically sympathetic article, "What the Fundamentalists Want" [May], Richard John Neuhaus has indeed told us much about what most fundamentalists, as well as people on the religious Right, actually want. But he has not told us enough. Curiously, Pastor Neuhaus does not even mention, let alone deal with, one current issue that evidently is quite significant both to fundamentalists and to adherents of the religious Right, namely, the drive to teach so-called "creation science" or "scientific creationism" (which is really the biblical account of creation as set forth in Genesis) in public-school science classes. While the fundamentalists and the religious Right are by no means coextensive, as Pastor Neuhaus correctly notes, probably most of the people in each group are in the creationist camp, which has been actively pressing this issue.

What dedicated creationists truly want—if they could have their "druthers"—would be to stamp out all teaching of Darwinian evolution in the public schools, though some of them may not be candid enough to admit this. The reason they feel this way is that they view the teaching of the theory of evolution, at bottom, as tending to undermine the inerrancy of the Bible and therefore as an indirect attack on their whole system of traditional beliefs. Unlike most members of mainstream Christian denominations, most fundamentalists construe the Bible literally, as being historically and scientifically true in every respect. That their convictions may be in conflict with the available evidence throughout the entire spectrum of scientific inquiry —in biology, geology, anthropology, physics, and astronomy—does not deter them. Obviously, creationists cannot and do not claim that the earth is flat, or that the sun revolves around the earth (which used to be a reasonable inference from Genesis). But they can and do still insist, for example, on God's special creation of Adam and Eve, on the worldwide flood at the time of Noah, and that the earth is only 10,000 years old, for none of which is there a shred of scientific proof. And although scientists are virtually unanimous in believing that evolution is the very cornerstone of biological science, the creationists are not persuaded. They cite relatively minor disagreements among scientists for rejecting the entire theory.

In 1968, unfortunately for the creationist cause, in the case of *Epperson* v. *Arkansas,* the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that a state statute which made it unlawful to teach the theory of evolution in public schools violated the establishment and free-exercise clauses of the First Amendment. Having lost that battle, the creationists have been demanding that public schools at least give equal time to scientific creationism whenever evolution is taught in public-school science classes. In fact, bills have been introduced in more than half of the state legislatures to achieve this objective and have actually been enacted in two states thus far, Arkansas and Louisiana. Both those laws, however, have been struck down by federal courts as in violation of the First Amendment. (The Louisiana case is still pending.)

In addition to their legislative drive, creationists have been vigorously pressing science-textbook publishers to eliminate or at least downgrade their material on evolution and to replace it with their own material. Moreover, since publishers naturally wish to sell textbooks in states where creationist sentiment is strong, creationists have had considerable success in this endeavor. Three new biology textbooks, for example, avoid using the word evolution altogether.

Like any scientific theory, of course, evolution can and should be subjected to the most critical scrutiny. Evidence either for it or against it can be adduced, examined, and either accepted or rejected. Scientific creationism, on the other hand, as it is advanced by fundamentalist advocates, is not really a theory at all. Rather it is an article of faith. While those who now embrace evolution are free to change their minds if new scientific evidence were to be presented, the creationists enjoy no such freedom. For them to change their minds would be to reject the inspired word of God, which would be unthinkable.

Support for scientific creationism, among those many millions of fundamentalists and religious Right adherents who do in fact support it, speaks volumes about their total mind-set. The failure of Pastor Neuhaus to address this issue at all is a serious omission on his part.

Samuel Rabinove
Legal Director
American Jewish Committee
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his otherwise illuminating article, Richard John Neuhaus misses a critical point. He writes:

> Of course some Jews protest that it is demeaning to be fitted into a theological system to which they do not subscribe. This, I believe, may be a mistake. Acceptance of Jews, which means also resistance to anti-Semitism, is better secured when it is religiously grounded. Some Jews take a more pragmatic view in welcoming fundamentalist support for Israel in particular. Irving Kristol recently noted, "It is their theology, but it is our Israel." To that sage observation I would add that Israel is more firmly supported *because* it is their theology and not simply their prudential geopolitical judgment.

It is not always true that "acceptance of Jews . . . means also resistance to anti-Semitism. . . ." In the course of their history the Jews have been accepted in various civilizations for a variety of reasons—social, economic, political, and religious—but this external accept-

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ance by rulers, clerics, and the masses did not always mean a repudiation of anti-Semitism. To the contrary, anti-Semitism has always had a nasty habit of undermining even the warmest acceptance of Jews.

It is true that acceptance of Jews is better secured when it is religiously grounded, but it depends on what kind of religious ground it is. Franklin Littell recently pointed out to me that the assignment of a role for the Jews in the theological system of modern fundamentalists is a variation on a theme that goes back to the Church Fathers and has been repeated down through the ages among Catholic and Protestant theologians and Church leaders. These religious leaders and thinkers were very accepting of the Jewish people until the Jews, responding to their own internal religious needs, refused to play the role assigned to them in the various Christian theological systems. Then these same religious leaders and thinkers did not hesitate to level the most violent anti-Jewish diatribes against the "stiff-necked people."

Littell compares the philo-Semitism of present-day fundamentalists with that of his teacher, the late Reinhold Niebuhr. Niebuhr's acceptance of the Jews was unconditional. He insisted on complete religious autonomy for the Jewish people. Niebuhr was prepared to honor whatever the Jews decided was best for them in a religious sense. But what if for some reason, asks Littell (though it seems unthinkable at the present time), world Jewry should decide that its salvation could best be achieved in the Diaspora rather than in the land of Israel and accordingly the Jewish population of Israel began to disperse? Would the modern fundamentalists, whose salvationist theology has assigned to the ingathered Jews in the land of Israel a pivotal role in the process of redemption, retain their unstinting support and friendship for the Jewish people? It is a question worth pondering.

JOSEPH P. SCHULTZ
University of Missouri
Kansas City, Missouri

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Richard John Neuhaus laid a number of ghosts most effectively in his article on the fundamentalists. It seems ironic that in an issue which carried nine pages of correspondence arguing about the voting behavior of Jews in the 1984 election [on Lucy S. Dawidowicz's "Politics, the Jews & the '84 Election," February] it was necessary to point out that the fundamentalist vote was not as monolithic as some had confidently supposed.

Of course, Pastor Neuhaus could not pursue all the points he made, but I would have liked to see him pay more attention to black fundamentalists. Whatever one's definition of fundamentalism, blacks are overrepresented in its ranks. And the vast majority of blacks are anti-abortion, as was Jesse Jackson before he was bitten by the presidential bug. . . .

I am not a fundamentalist, or even a Protestant, but I have a gut feeling that any group that is the object of so much loathing must be doing something right.

THOMAS H. CLANCY, S.J.
New Orleans, Louisiana

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While I certainly would not disagree with the main thrust and substance of Richard John Neuhaus's excellent article, which appears to be a guarded defense of what is commonly referred to in the secular media as the "new religious Right," I would question his use of the term "fundamentalist" as a description of the movement he writes about. Though he admits that not all adherents to this conservative religious ideology are fundamentalists (and vice versa) and recognizes that this terminology has often been used . . . in a pejorative sense, I think he is doing an injustice to historic fundamentalism and fundamentalists in attaching this label to groups and religious leaders who are not fundamentalists at all (even though some of them may claim to be and may believe in the fundamentals of the Christian faith).

What is a fundamentalist? . . . According . . . to the man who coined the term, Curtis Lee Laws, fundamentalism describes those ready "to do battle royal for the fundamentals" of the Christian faith. This dedication to contending for biblical truth . . . and the maintenance of ecclesiastical separation from apostasy and "modernism" . . . are important characteristics that distinguish historical fundamentalism from other evangelical movements, such as the so-called "new evangelicals." The latter, some of whose adherents would

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be considered part of the new religious Right due to their conservative political beliefs, are inclusivists in their religious evangelistic methodology. This has now resulted in their attempts to find common cause with the "liberal" National Council of Churches and World Council of Churches, organizations which the fundamentalists consider apostate. . . .

It seems to me that what fundamentalists like Bob Jones (of Bob Jones University), Carl McIntire (president of the International Council of Christian Churches), and Curtis Hutson (editor of *The Sword of the Lord* and successor to John R. Rice) find so disturbing and damaging to biblical Christianity, i.e., fundamentalism, is Jerry Falwell's use of the term fundamentalist to promote non-fundamentalist objectives. Jerry Falwell seems to be trying to make fundamentalism more "respectable" (in the eyes of the secular and "liberal" religious world) by blurring the historical distinction between fundamentalists and non-separatist evangelicals. This may be an appropriate strategy for purely political goals, but his mixing of religious orthodoxy with such goals has caused much confusion, turmoil, and strife within the Christian community. . . .

Ronald L. West
Louisville, Kentucky

To the Editor of Commentary:

Spouting statistics from Gallup, Roper, other pollsters, and some sociologists, Richard John Neuhaus shows little regard for the "sacredness of the individual," supposedly a centerpiece of the Judeo-Christian ethic.

What he and his fundamentalist allies are seeking is government establishment of religion by plebiscite. For example, he cites polls showing that "94 percent of the American people profess belief in God, 88 percent say the Bible is the inspired word of God, 90 percent identify themselves religiously with a specific Christian denomination or as Jews, 89 percent of us say we pray regularly, and so forth." Are these alleged majorities so insecure that they must have government help in ganging up on the minorities? And must all of us be reduced to ciphers? . . .

Nowadays religious tests for public office are reappearing, as exemplified in the recent elaborate questionnaire with which Senators East, Denton, and Hatch confronted judicial nominee Joseph Rodriguez. Equality before the law is destroyed by such practices. What is billed as Reagan's "second American revolution" is actually a counterrevolution. Integral to the revolution for which Roger Williams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and other leaders fought was the notion that religion was not within the "cognizance" or "purview" of civil government—and, indeed, Roger Williams was kicked out of colonial Massachusetts for "dangerous" preachments, including his opposition to making the Ten Commandments part of the criminal law. Contrast this with Pastor Neuhaus, who cites "the Bible, the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the teachings of the Church, etc.," as a government frame of reference "for a moral consensus among the American people." . . .

Stanley Lichtenstein
Bethesda, Maryland

To the Editor of Commentary:

Richard John Neuhaus has written a clever piece of propaganda in which he seeks to quiet the alarm many Americans feel over the attempt by the fundamentalists to take over the country. . . .

The fundamentalists claim to be on a "campaign to 'restore traditional moral and spiritual values.'" Pastor Neuhaus says: "Whatever one may think of the merits of school prayers, their removal was understandably seen as a major step toward the secularization of public space." Well, public space should be secularized. The time spent in school amounts to at most five out of the twenty-four hours, five days a week, for some thirty weeks in the year. Is that too much for me to ask for to save my child from the necessity of taking the name of the Lord in vain? After all, the fundamentalists have already had "two millennia" and they still have all the rest of the time after school. . . .

I would not for the world forbid the religious teaching of the fundamentalists or of anybody else; I am simply alarmed at their invasion of "secular space" which should be administered under the Constitution and its amendments, as established by our American forefathers. . . .

[Rabbi Emeritus] Ario S. Hyams
Temple Beth Sholom
Roslyn Heights, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

It is by no means evident that what the fundamentalists want is desirable either for the Church or for society. Ezra Stiles's comment in 1760 on the "unhappy excesses" of the Great Awakening—"Multitudes were seriously, soberly, and solemnly out of their wits"—is not inappropriate for those who contribute to the vulgarization of the Christian religion and tout it as a religious revival.

Who should not loathe ignorance, pettiness, and cant, and fear "the caprices of little men" that threaten to undermine what has been achieved by competent men and women devoted to truth and liberty (John 8:32)?

[Reverend] Junius J. Martin
Brunswick, Georgia

Richard John Neuhaus writes:

In "What the Fundamentalists Want" I urged that in our approach to politicized fundamentalism we should move from unexamined contempt to a search for understanding. The Reverend Junius J. Martin disagrees. He apparently believes that contempt is in order when the world is divided between vulgarians who are out of their wits and "competent men and women devoted to truth and liberty." The disagreement would seem to be fundamental.

Equally fundamental, it appears, is Rabbi Ario S. Hyams's disagreement. I do not know anyone who is proposing "the necessity of taking the name of the Lord in vain" in public schools. There are proposals for voluntary, student-led prayers and moments of silence. Whether or not we approve of such proposals, fundamentalists have hardly been pushing them for "two millennia." The fundamentalism in question has only been around for about seventy years, and the exclusion of prayer from public schools, far from being something "established by our American forefathers," happened a little over twenty years ago. Rabbi Hyams's protest is instructive in that it reflects a common propensity for forgetting how very recent are the developments to which the religious Right is reacting.

I would invite Stanley Lichtenstein to consider whether the religious Right's concern about the unborn, the defective, and the aged who have overstayed their welcome is not one form of regard for the "sacredness of the individual." His

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bristling complaint notwithstanding, I believe there is no evidence that "religious tests for public office are reappearing." A distinction should be made between a religious test established by law—which is unconstitutional and, as far as I know, suggested by no one—and the popular exercise of judgment based upon a candidate's beliefs, including beliefs that may be of a religious nature. I imagine, for example, a good many Americans would be reluctant to vote for a practicing Satanist. On the other hand, they might consider a candidate's being a Jew, or a Roman Catholic, or a terrific basketball player, or a woman a positive factor in their decision. The Constitution does not prescribe or proscribe the criteria by which we decide to vote for or against someone. As for Roger Williams, he is frequently portrayed as a charter member of the ACLU-in-formation, but I believe the evidence is clear that his devotion to religious freedom was profoundly religious in character. While adamant about freedom of conscience "in matters of religious concernments," his Rhode Island charter of 1663 assumes the moral standards essential to "the civil peace of our said colony." That religious freedom is itself in largest part a religious achievement has been overlooked in many recent tellings of the American story.

Ronald L. West's suggestion that Jerry Falwell is not really a fundamentalist is a useful illustration of how fissiparous is the world of fundamentalism. Father Thomas Clancy is right about the existence of black fundamentalists, and about Jesse Jackson's abandonment of his oft-proclaimed position of highest principle, but that is somewhat to the side of my article's concern. Blacks of fundamentalist belief have kept their distance from a fundamentalist movement that was historically associated with racial segregation—an association that today's fundamentalist leadership is eager to repudiate.

Joseph P. Schultz and I have a semantic difference. I meant "acceptance" in the way I used it, meaning resistance to anti-Semitism. Mr. Schultz is certainly correct in suggesting that a certain *toleration* of Jews has often existed alongside virulent anti-Semitism. I am less sure that Mr. Schultz accurately represents Reinhold Niebuhr's view. His acceptance of Jews was unconditional, except, and of necessity, that they somehow be identifiable as Jews. One cannot accept *as a Jew* someone who is not identifiable as a Jew. The question of who is a Jew is very old, much controverted, and the business of Jews to decide. But I should imagine that many Jews, as well as fundamentalist Christians, would be unsettled if the answer did not include commitment to the well-being of the state of Israel.

I welcome Samuel Rabinove's raising the question of scientific creationism. I did not mention it, as I did not mention a number of other issues, because it was not listed among the chief goals of the American Coalition for Traditional Values (ACTV), and because one must stop somewhere. Mr. Rabinove is undoubtedly right in saying scientific creationism—and the teaching of it as an alternative theory in the schools—is important to many, perhaps most, on the religious Right. I believe he overestimates the readiness of those who are committed to evolutionary theory to change their minds on the basis of the evidence, and he overreaches himself in claiming to know what his opponents "truly want," as distinct from what they say they want. In drawing the lines so sharply, Mr. Rabinove invites a regression to the last century's polarizations over Darwin and Darwinists. I readily admit to having no scientific expertise in these matters, but my reading of the literature leads me to believe that there is today a remarkable state of flux in scientific theory about the start, the development, and the probable end of the universe (see, for instance, Robert Jastrow's *God and the Astronomers*). In this area too I believe the course of wisdom is marked by mutual humility and reasoned accommodation.

The most valuable point that I take Mr. Rabinove to be making, and with which I wholeheartedly agree, is that, in a democracy, public discourse and compromise must be achieved by public reason. That is, public policy cannot be made on the basis of private authority, whether religious or otherwise. This is a truth that not only fundamentalists have a hard time accepting. But one who accepts this truth is not saying that he is devoid of ultimate convictions, open to changing his mind on everything, and unprepared to declare some things, to use Mr. Rabinove's word, unthinkable. What such a person is agreeing to is that, when he enters the *public* arena, he will make his case on the basis of evidence and reasoning that are accessible to other rational actors in that arena. We are then democratically obligated to engage such a person on the basis of the reasons that he advances, not, as Mr. Rabinove would seem to suggest, on the basis of our suspicions about the *real* reasons he makes the argument he does. But, of course, because we are real people of dreams and fears as well as reason, we do not in practice make these distinctions so neatly. And that is why, as the politicized fundamentalists are reminding us, democracy will always be a more confused and raucous enterprise than is implied in some books of political theory.

Neoliberalism

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his article on neoliberalism ["Does Neoliberalism Have a Future?," March], Leslie Lenkowsky managed to spell my name wrong in citing one of the books he ostensibly was discussing (*A New Road for America: The Neoliberal Movement*, edited by Charles Peters and myself). This is a picayune mistake, not worthy of mention were it not so clearly emblematic of a second—and far more telling—problem. Mr. Lenkowsky professes to criticize a book that, as far as I can tell from his article, he either didn't read or purposely ignored because its contents would prove so inconvenient to his thesis.

Let me acknowledge a certain long-standing frustration with those of Mr. Lenkowsky's ilk who profess to offer a definitive critique of the "neoliberal movement" without even acknowledging—much less discussing the ideas of—those few of us foolhardy souls who are actually willing to march under this admittedly awkward label. As Mr. Lenkowsky does, these commentators tend to focus on those Democratic politicians who specifically *reject* the label (as Gary Hart does); they also tend to rely heavily on the word of other *observers* as to what the movement supposedly is—much like war correspondents who report on progress at the front by talking to other reporters in the capital's hotel bars.

Accordingly, Mr. Lenkowsky's characterization of the neoliberal movement seems almost entirely based on Randall Rothenberg's

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book, *The Neoliberals*. Now, I respect Mr. Rothenberg and find him an able and often perceptive journalist. But he has taken pains to reject the neoliberal label for himself. (Indeed, in failing to note this, I think Mr. Lenkowsky does *him* a disservice as well.) And what of Charles Peters, editor of the *Washington Monthly* magazine and one of, if not *the*, major proponents of neoliberalism? I'm obviously biased from my association with Mr. Peters and his publication (I'm a contributing editor). But Mr. Lenkowsky's failure to mention either him or the magazine in his article—*especially* when he ostensibly was reviewing our book—is equivalent to my trying to analyze neoconservatism by similarly ignoring Irving Kristol and the *Public Interest*.

I won't pretend that the volume Charles Peters and I edited is in any way definitive. Rather, I respectfully suggest that it would give COMMENTARY readers a far better picture of neoliberalism than they received from Mr. Lenkowsky's twice-removed treatment. The book consists of edited transcripts from a conference on neoliberalism that was sponsored by the *Washington Monthly* in October 1983. Over forty panelists participated; many were self-proclaimed neoliberals, but many others were curious observers or even critics.

The conference hardly produced a unified picture of the movement; there was much disagreement. Some of us favor a draft; others don't. Some think that the answer to rising medical costs lies in more competition; a few of us have come to embrace the more radical solution of a national-health service in which doctors work directly for the government. Even so, some degree of consensus seems to exist on a wide range of issues. Neoliberals generally favor some type of pay-for-performance for government employees—especially teachers. Some neoliberals are so concerned about the loss of accountability in political life that they urge a revival of patronage by which, say, half of all federal employees would have a direct stake in the success or failure of a President's program. As for middle-class entitlement programs such as Social Security, most neoliberals believe they ought to be means-tested at the very least, or merged into one unified insurance program against need (much like the guaranteed-annual-income concept once embraced by George McGovern and Milton Friedman).

Mr. Lenkowsky's selective portrait has the effect of simply reinforcing the stereotype that already is so common—that "neoliberal" describes any photogenic young Democrat who blow-dries his hair and walks around with a gleam of silicon wafers in his eye. That is why, I suspect, he chose to ignore the considerable evidence from this conference that suggests a far different picture.

Take all the supposed neoliberal enthusiasm for high technology and "industrial policy." Not a single neoliberal panelist at the conference trotted out the "high technology as the wave of the future" line; several specifically rejected it and urged the resuscitation of ailing "smokestack" industries. As for industrial policy, some neoliberals favor it, but it is hardly a matter of orthodoxy among us. Again, at this conference not a single panelist embraced the notion, while some specifically repudiated it, opting for alternative ways of reviving basic industries, such as the employee buy-out of the Weirton Steel mill.

As for military reform, I almost laughed out loud when Mr. Lenkowsky lumped neoliberals in with those who urge "adopting more sophisticated and mobile weapons." This is the rationale that the Pentagon has used to justify technological pink elephants such as the DIVAD gun, the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, and the F-18 fighter-bomber—all of which have been savaged in recent years in the pages of the *Washington Monthly*. Meanwhile, neoliberal writers (most notably James Fallows, author of *National Defense*) have repeatedly urged the U.S. military to stop being so enamored of high technology and rely more on *simpler* weapons and tactics that have the virtue of actually working on the battlefield.

I don't begrudge Mr. Lenkowsky his judgment that neoliberalism is at times confused and even contradictory. My point is simply this: is it too much to ask that if you are going to take on neoliberalism, you at least rely on primary sources—and take aim at something other than straw men?

PHILLIP A. KEISLING
Portland, Oregon

LESLIE LENKOWSKY writes:

Apart from my reversing two letters of his name, for which I apologize, I am not sure just what Phillip A. Keisling is objecting to, other than that I devoted more attention to Randall Rothenberg's book than to the one he and Charles Peters edited. I never said that Rothenberg was a neoliberal and Mr. Keisling does not claim his reporting was wrong. Therefore, I do not see why Rothenberg's effort to present a comprehensive account of neoliberal ideas should be a less useful source than the volume Mr. Keisling co-edited which is, as he says, not definitive and, in fact, consists of comments—often quite brief and undeveloped—delivered at a neoliberal conference by people whose political sympathies were unidentified.

In any case, nothing in the Keisling and Peters book is at variance with my observations about neoliberalism, as Mr. Keisling's letter makes clear. My point was that whether they favor high technology or smokestack, whether or not they embrace the notion of industrial policy, neoliberals seem to think our economic problems are largely due to the selfishness of special interests, a view often expressed in the Keisling-Peters volume. I thought it unlikely that their actual proposals would disprove this judgment, and Mr. Keisling's example of a union buy-out of a West Virginia steel mill hardly makes me change my mind. And Charles Peters's praise (which Mr. Keisling chooses to overlook), in his opening address to the conference, of the slogan of Franklin D. Roosevelt's unlamented NRA—"We do our part"—either reinforces my claim that neoliberal thinking about the economy amounts to promoting political brokering by another name or betrays a stunning ignorance of the nature of the NRA.

Similarly, I also wrote that neoliberal ire extended not just to special interests but to anyone with specialized knowledge or training, a conclusion supported by examples drawn from the Keisling-Peters book. Mr. Keisling is kind enough to cite another in repeating the odd neoliberal argument that the existence of a career civil service is a large part of what's wrong with the federal government.

Finally, my point about military reform was that despite a "variety of ideas for reshaping America's defenses," neoliberalism was strangely silent about what it would do with these forces. Mr.

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Keisling's letter leaves us still waiting for some indication.

I can understand why Mr. Keisling would be upset with me for presenting a "selective portrait" of what he and his fellow neoliberals (whoever they may be) stand for. In trying to extract a few general themes from a mass of writings, one necessarily exposes their contradictions, omissions, and underlying values. I am sorry if Mr. Keisling finds the picture unsettling, but that does not change its reality.

Marx

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In her discussion of my book, *The Meaning of Karl Marx,* Gertrude Himmelfarb claims that I misstate the date of one of Marx's letters ["The 'Real' Marx," April]. As she puts it, "that letter was written not, as Mazlish says, upon the death of [the Marxes'] oldest child (in November 1850), but in July 1851, a few weeks after the birth of Helene's child." What my book says—the context is a discussion of Marx's relations to his wife—is: "Jenny could be, and was, nervous and 'mercurial.' In the terrible period around 1850, marked by the death of their first child, Marx wrote to Engels about his wife's 'floods of tears the whole night long' which 'tire my patience and make me angry. . . . I feel pity for my wife.' " My footnote specifically identifies the letter as Marx to Engels, July 31, 1851.

This is simply one example of Miss Himmelfarb's persistent misreading and misunderstanding of details and context displayed in her comments on my book, but it would take an article the length of hers to deal with all of them. Let me, however, pursue merely this one point. Miss Himmelfarb assumes what most scholars do not, that Marx's straying was known to his wife (though in a footnote Miss Himmelfarb admits "the evidence is inconclusive"). On this assumption, she then strongly implies that Jenny Marx's tears were caused by the birth of Helene's child, fathered by Marx. In fact, Jenny Marx was prone to "nerves" from young womanhood on; the dire conditions in which the Marxes lived in London exacerbated her condition. As David McLellan points out in his biography, *Karl Marx:* "At the death of her first child in November 1850 Jenny was quite 'beside herself' and 'dangerously overwrought.' " Marx's infidelity *may* have been known to his wife, and added to her tears, but the tears were obviously there before. This is clearly the point I make in my text.

As for Miss Himmelfarb's general position, I am glad to see that she has stopped being a "closet psychohistorian," and now is publicly prepared to offer us a psychoanalysis of Marx (even though under the guise of attacking psychohistory). Can the reader imagine, however, what she would have said if *I* had said any of the things she says? Or am I reading as serious scholarship what is merely satire?

BRUCE MAZLISH
MIT
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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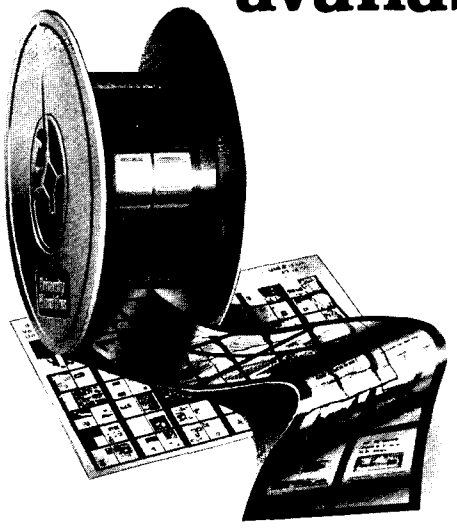

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Gertrude Himmelfarb's dismantling of Bruce Mazlish's *The Meaning of Karl Marx* is astute and definitive. I would like to correct its emphasis in only one peripheral respect. Miss Himmelfarb maintains that if Mazlish had strictly applied his psychohistorical method to Marx as he formerly did to such scorned targets as J. S. Mill, Nixon, and Kissinger, he would surely have been obliged to reduce Marx's vision to oedipal and excremental origins. The point of course is that such withholding of Mazlish's usual tendentious allegorizing serves his own sentimental-Marxist loyalties. The lay reader, however, needs to be more directly told that there *is* no rigorous psychohistorical method from which Mazlish has chosen to abstain for Marx's sake. With few exceptions, Freudian psychohistory has always been a "scientific" instrument for ad-hoc denigration of personalities and developments to which the interpreter bears a prior dislike.

Moreover, psychoanalysis itself is scarcely better than its academic stepchild in this regard. When does the Freudian analyst decide to invoke reductive infantile determinism, and when, in contrast, does he take the patient's manifest assertions at face value? The answer is: whenever he pleases! Miss Himmelfarb's excellent article is not only a contribution toward an unromantic view of Marx but also further evidence of the central problem besetting psychoanalysis: the total fancifulness and open-endedness of its causal claims.

FREDERICK CREWS

Berkeley, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Gertrude Himmelfarb's "The 'Real' Marx" is a *plaidoyer* in defense of capitalism, masquerading as an exposé of Marx. The world has long known of Miss Himmelfarb's list of Marx's slurs re Jews, blacks, and others. She tries to convict him of anti-Semitism, and the evidence she rehashes is real. Nevertheless, the charge is false to historical reality.

To be sure, Marx and Engels developed a materialist methodology. However, as pioneers, they could no more completely emancipate themselves from their culture's dominant ideas than Freud could cure himself of all his neuroses. They became upper-class Victorians, albeit with revolutionary politics. To us they are male chauvinists, but so what? So was almost every male of the day. By our standards, they were racists, but so was Lincoln. Marx's slurs are anti-Semitic by modern criteria. This too is from a contemporary perspective. Miss Himmelfarb quotes Marx's "On the Jewish Question," but "forgets" to tell us that though he was hostile to Judaism, he was strongly for Jewish emancipation. Similarly, she "forgets" to inform her readers that the Marx who called Ferdinand Lassalle a "Jewish Nigger" was tireless in mobilizing the British public against official efforts to aid the Confederacy.

Today no civilized person uses Marx's language. Or that of Theodor Herzl, who, when he attended a synagogue in 1894, wrote of his fellow Jews, with their "bold, misshapen noses, furtive and cunning eyes." And there is Herzl's denunciation of a Rothschild as "*Mauschel*," the German corruption of Moses. According to Herzl, it was "as though, at some dark moment in our history some inferior human material got into our unfortunate people and blended with it."

It is jarring to think of two of history's most famous Jews crapping on Jews. However, it is improper to judge them as if they lived in our post-Holocaust, post *Brown* v. *Board of Education* world. In the end, they are to be judged by the relevance of their political programs to their times and ours.

Miss Himmelfarb makes an elementary error in logic, which reveals her game: "If Marx was so incredibly wrong about Judaism, may it not be that he was also wrong about its 'synonym,' capitalism?" No. Darwin was a racist by our conceptions, but we must read his *The Descent of Man*, and listen to the anti-Semitic Wagner.

Let's reverse her question. Lenin purged Marxism of its chauvinist dross, even opposing harmless dialect humor as prejudicial. Tell us, Miss Himmelfarb, if you will: did Lenin's merciless struggle against the pogromists substantiate his implacable hatred of their capitalist patrons?

LENNI BRENNER

Berkeley, California

GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB writes:

The only example Bruce Mazlish gives, as typifying my "persistent misreading and misunderstanding" of his book, in fact entirely confirms my reading and understanding of it. The sentence from his book that he himself quotes explicitly ascribes the letter by Marx to Engels, complaining of his wife's "floods of tears," to "the terrible period around 1850, marked by the death of their first child." But that letter was written, not in that terrible period "around 1850," but in another terrible period, in July 1851, after the birth of Marx's illegitimate child. The letter is correctly dated in the footnote at the end of the book, but incorrectly dated in the text of the book—a misdating of some consequence, since it has the effect of distracting attention from that illegitimate birth.

Mr. Mazlish quotes McLellan in support of his contention that the "floods of tears" referred to in the letter of July 31, 1851, had been induced by the death of their child the preceding November. But he is telescoping several sentences in McLellan's book. When McLellan describes Jenny Marx as "beside herself" and "dangerously overwrought," he is speaking specifically of November 1850 when the child died. In the following sentences, however, he makes it clear that the "floods of tears" letter was written well into the next year. He also goes on to say that "the necessity of preserving appearances and the fear of the inevitable rumors only served to increase the strain on Jenny's nerves"—this after the birth, in Marx's house, of the illegitimate child on June 23. He also quotes (as I did) another letter by Marx on August 2, 1851 (two days after the "floods of tears" letter and one day after the official registration of the child's birth), complaining of the "idiotic talebearers" who were aggravating his wife's nervous condition.

Since much of Marx's correspondence was destroyed, first by Engels and then by Marx's daughters, we cannot know for a certainty whether Jenny Marx knew of the affair that had resulted in the birth of this child. All I claimed in my essay was that such evidence as we have (including a cryptic reference in her memoir to a very troublesome event "in the early summer of 1851") suggests that she probably did.

The more important issue, however, is whether, as Mr. Mazlish says, I have ceased being a "closet psychohistorian" and am propos-

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ing to psychoanalyze Marx under the guise of attacking psychohistory. I want to assure him that I have no such secret strategy and no intention of intruding on his turf. I thought I had made it clear early in my essay that I reject the basic assumption of psychohistory: that the only way to understand, as Mr. Mazlish puts it, "the real power and meaning" of Marx's work is in the light of "the real, living human being, Karl Marx." It is my belief that the best way to understand the power and meaning of Marx's work (or anyone else's) is, as I said, "through the work itself, that to try to understand it in terms of the personal life of its 'originator' is necessarily reductive and simplistic." So far from agreeing with Mr. Mazlish that Marxism is "Marx writ large," I suggested that " 'Marx writ large' is Marxism writ small."

If I then went on to criticize the psychoanalytic evidence as Mr. Mazlish presents it, and to point out all the obvious psychoanalytic evidence that he ignores or belittles, it was not to offer an alternative psychoanalytic interpretation of Marx or Marxism, but rather, as a responsible reviewer, to take his book seriously on its own terms. I agree with Frederick Crews that there is no rigorous psychohistorical method, that all too often psychohistory has been used to denigrate persons and ideas that the psychohistorian happens to dislike. Indeed, this was the point of my comparison of this book with Mr. Mazlish's previous books. It is because Mr. Mazlish is so intent on preserving his image of Marx as a "humanist" that he now withholds from him the kind of psychoanalysis he used so freely, and invidiously, in his books on Mill, Nixon, Kissinger, *et al.*

Lenni Brenner's argument, that my evidence of Marx's anti-Semitism is "real" but that the charge is "false to historical reality," is the familiar apologia for all forms of anti-Semitism. My evidence is derived not from occasional remarks made in private but from the sustained argument of a published essay. "On the Jewish Question" was reprinted, widely quoted, and praised, and became the exemplar of a classic genre of socialist anti-Semitism. This is surely a "historical reality" of some importance. To compare Marx in this respect with Herzl is as grotesque as to describe Darwin as a "racist." When I suggested that if Marx was as wrong about Judaism as Mr. Mazlish says he was, perhaps he was also wrong about capitalism, I was not arbitrarily linking together disparate subjects (like Wagner's music and his anti-Semitism); it is Mr. Mazlish himself who says that in that essay Marx used Judaism as a "synonym" for capitalism. And, I would add, not only in that essay but in the work of his maturity, the classic of Marxism, *Capital*, where capitalists are described as "inwardly circumcised Jews."

Since Mr. Brenner identifies my essay as a "*plaidoyer* in defense of capitalism," it may be relevant to identify him as the author of *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators*, which maintains that Zionists were in collusion with fascists and Nazis, and that, indeed, "Zionism is racism."

Solzhenitsyn

To the Editor of Commentary:

Only time will tell whether I have been fair or unfair to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and his first wife, Natalia Reshetovskaya, in my biography, and Veronika Stein is entitled to her opinion on the matter [Letters from Readers, June, on "The Terrible Question of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn," by Norman Podhoretz, February]. But I cannot let stand her accusation of bad faith or the allegation that I was "recklessly uncritical" in my handling of Reshetovskaya's version of events.

Mrs. Stein cites as evidence my handling of the Solzhenitsyns' divorce proceedings during 1971-72, and insinuates that I deliberately skipped over facts that I was aware of but preferred to suppress ("it is hard to believe that Mr. Scammell could have been unaware of them," etc.). In particular she refers to an episode involving a junior lawyer, Alexeyeva, who had been blackmailed by the KGB into intervening in the divorce case and trying to prevent the divorce from taking place. This episode was first described in print in Galina Vishnevskaya's book *Galina*, that appeared some months after mine, but the clear implication is that if Vishnevskaya knew about it, I should have done too.

To this I would like to say the following. First, no one who has read my book could possibly accuse me of unfairness—indeed, my impartiality has been underlined by reviewer after reviewer. Second, I was in close touch with Mrs. Stein over a period of many years and interviewed her "extensively," as she admits in her letter. On many occasions I questioned her closely on Solzhenitsyn's divorce—and she gave me much information about it. But that information had one distinguishing characteristic: never once or in any respect was it favorable to Reshetovskaya or unfavorable to Solzhenitsyn. And never once were "the stormy events of 1972" or the name of Alexeyeva mentioned to me by Mrs. Stein. Yet now she accuses me of suppressing vital facts. If these particular facts were so vital, why did she never mention them at the time?

As for the events described by Vishnevskaya, I would like to point out that over a period of three years I sought an interview with her husband, Mstislav Rostropovich (I must confess that it never occurred to me to approach Vishnevskaya separately), and his secretary gave me his final answer on May 6, 1982: "After many vacillations and uncertainties . . . Mr. Rostropovich has decided that he cannot participate in the interview you suggest." I should add that of the hundreds of individuals I approached with a request to interview them on the subject of Solzhenitsyn, Rostropovich was the only one who refused. One consequence was that I never learned of this episode until Vishnevskaya's book appeared.

Michael Scammell
Woking, Surrey, England

Celan's "Death Fugue"

To the Editor of Commentary:

No doubt an access of editorial modesty accounts for the curious omission of a pertinent fact from John Felstiner's finely conceived and beautifully written article, "Paul Celan: The Strain of Jewishness" [April]. That fact is that Celan's great poem about the concentration camps, "Death Fugue," appeared thirty years earlier in English translation in Commentary itself, in the issue of March 1955. (The English version was by Clement Greenberg.) In such matters, perhaps, modesty may occasionally give way to justified pride.

Len Kolodny
St. Petersburg, Florida

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Bitburg: Who Forgot What

Midge Decter

IT HARDLY seems possible that in the year 1985, with a number of grave decisions and responsibilities facing him, the President of the United States would permit himself to get embroiled in a debate about so unquestionably settled an issue as the nature of Nazism. What seems even less likely is that of all Presidents, the author of this imbroglio should have been Ronald Reagan, a man who has paid a price in derision for his undeviating—or as his opponents like to call it, "simple-minded"—hatred of totalitarianism. Yet that is exactly what happened during the month of April past, and in a manner calculated to stir deep resentment and disaffection on all sides, not least his own.

Anyone who reads newspapers or watches television hardly needs to be reminded of the circumstances in which this improbable brouhaha took place. Mr. Reagan was going to Germany for an economic summit conference. His visit there was to coincide, or very nearly, with the fortieth anniversary of V-E Day. Chancellor Helmut Kohl requested that as a visible acknowledgment of the deep postwar friendship between the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Reagan accompany him to the military cemetery at Bitburg, a site conveniently located in the immediate vicinity of an American air base, and there lay a wreath in honor of the German war dead.

Mr. Reagan had also been invited, by whom it is not clear, to visit Dachau. He accepted the first invitation and declined the second, on the grounds, he said, that a concentration camp would introduce the wrong symbolism into what was supposed to be a celebration of the birth of the new democratic Germany.

Whether Mr. Reagan's going so far toward settling the account of World War II as a visit to any German military cemetery would by itself have stirred much strong opposition is at this point difficult to say. Certainly many American veterans of that war would have found reason to be unhappy with a ceremonial display of retroactive homage to the German army, as, no doubt, would the Jewish community. In any case, it was soon revealed that along with those of some two thousand ordinary soldiers, the cemetery at Bitburg also contained the graves of forty-eight (some said forty-seven, some forty-nine) members of the SS. This for large sectors of American public opinion entirely altered the nature of the occasion: honoring soldiers was one thing, however debatable, but including the SS, Hitler's special corps of genocidal murderers, was quite another, particularly in view of the President's refusal at the same time to visit a concentration camp.

Washington gossip had it that the ensuing embarrassment to the President, an embarrassment that was to plague him up to and through the actual ceremony on Sunday, May 6, was owing to the sloppy advance work of the team he had sent to Germany to fix the arrangements for his visit. Snow had covered the graves at Bitburg when they inspected the place, the explanation ran, and they had been unable to see the SS markings on the headstones. Some people laid the blame instead at the feet of Helmut Kohl, who, in his insistence that Mr. Reagan go to Bitburg of all places, had led his good friend up, so to speak, the graveyard path. But whoever was responsible for so needlessly troublesome an obligation, Mr. Reagan announced that he was determined to fulfill it. He had given his word, and he was not a man to go back on that.

Washington gossip also had it that the President was surprised, as well as deeply dismayed, by the explosion that followed. Helmut Kohl had after all been at some political risk in accepting deployment of U.S. intermediate-range missiles. The Soviets were using the forthcoming anniversary to make propaganda hay with Nazism. The real politics of the occasion, that is, were to be found elsewhere, and it was in the direction of these that the President felt his primary duty lay. People in the United States might have been expected to understand.

Nevertheless, the American Legion, normally among his staunchest supporters, strongly protested his plan to go to Bitburg. Editorialists and columnists across the land, and far from only the unfriendly ones, took up the cry. As did Congress. Even a group of conservative loyalists joined the congressional majority and made urgent representations to Mr. Reagan. The main thrust of all the

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criticism and pleading that burst upon the President in those last painful days of April was that there were other ways, other gestures to make, other gravesites to visit, that would more appropriately signify forgiveness and reconciliation.

It was widely agreed, for example, that he should at the very least add Dachau or some other concentration camp to his itinerary. "If anything," said the *Christian Science Monitor*, "to visit a concentration camp in the company of a President's West German hosts . . . can be an affirmation that the future of better conduct, of repentance and forgiveness and the healing of enmity, is already under way." Others made further suggestions, the New York *Post* and a dozen other newspapers that he visit the grave of Konrad Adenauer, *USA Today* that he go to the cathedral in Cologne or the bridge at Remagen, where U.S. troops first crossed the Rhine. It was even suggested that he pay homage to the late Pastor Martin Niemoeller—a man whose subsequent winning of the Lenin Peace Prize might be thought to have cast a certain backward shadow on the anti-totalitarian bona fides of his criticism of Hitler. Alternatives aside, Mr. Reagan was above all urged not to go to Bitburg. With the rather surprising exceptions of Jody Powell, once press secretary in the Carter White House and now a syndicated columnist, and to some extent also George F. Will in *Newsweek*, no one, not even those who supported the President's decision, defended it on its merits.

And then, of course, there were the Jews. Perhaps most notable among them was Elie Wiesel, who spoke not only for Jews in general but more particularly for survivors of the Holocaust. By chance in the White House to receive a congressional medal, Mr. Wiesel stood face to face with the President in the full view of the television cameras and eloquently instructed him that his place was not with the SS but with its victims. There was no question, then or later, that with but few exceptions Elie Wiesel was expressing the sentiment of the Jewish community.

If Mr. Reagan had been taken by surprise to find himself in what was to prove a major confrontation with that community, the Jews for their part had also been taken by surprise: would they really, after forty years, be forced to explain to the President of the United States the significance of the Holocaust and the reasons for their passion about it? Hitler's systematic slaughter of the six million was still officially much on their lips—after all, Elie Wiesel himself was chairman of a presidentially-appointed Holocaust commission—but certainly with no expectation that its meaning would once again be subject to public argument.

To complicate these difficult matters still further, it was no secret to the world that Mr. Reagan's relations with the American Jewish community were somewhat touchy. Though in 1984 the Democratic party had knuckled under to a known and identified anti-Semite, the Jews had continued to vote Democratic. Though Mr. Reagan's policy was no less supportive of Israel than any other President's, and more than many, and though he was far more supportive of the views of most Jews on affirmative action, they had continued by a healthy margin to reject him.

In this case, however, he would be making his gesture toward Germany not as a politician but as the spokesman for, the embodiment of, the American people. The Jews, it seems no exaggeration to say, were up in arms. They began relentlessly to pressure him both in public and in private to cancel his visit to Bitburg. Protest meetings were organized. A group of Holocaust survivors called for a demonstration against him at Bitburg itself. The American Jewish Congress announced that on the day of the Bitburg ceremony, it was taking a delegation to Munich to honor the graves of anti-Nazi martyrs.

THERE is little doubt that when Ronald Reagan first announced his German itinerary, he did not imagine that he was putting himself in the position of having to discourse on questions of German collective guilt and responsibility. His mind had clearly been elsewhere, on the budget, on the crisis in international trade, on his battle to secure even token congressional support for the *contras* in Nicaragua. But hit, as it were, from the blind side, he marched himself exactly into the moral minefield it had been the purpose of his day with Helmut Kohl to avoid. Challenged where challenge had obviously neither been expected nor prepared for, he responded again and again with the nearest defense to hand —each dragging him closer to a place he could not possibly have wanted to get to.

First he said that Bitburg had been chosen because Americans as well as Germans were buried there, which happened simply not to be true. At another time he said that there were hardly any Germans left alive who had gone through the Nazi era, which was not, like his first statement, a plain error, but a piece of self-evident foolishness. These miscarried efforts to defend himself might have been forgotten but for the most tangled and sensitive, and costly, piece of defensive reaching of all: against the immediate violent reaction to the news that his wreath was to be laid in the presence of SS graves, he declared that the SS men buried in those graves were not men at all but mere boys, and as much victims of the Nazis as those who perished in the camps.

All this from the man who has by foe as well as friend, *ad nauseam* in fact, been acknowledged to be the Great Communicator. But what people actually mean by this is that Mr. Reagan is gifted with certain compellingly attractive qualities not often seen among our political leaders: genuine modesty and simplicity, humor, and an unmistak-

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ably easy relation to himself. These are what he "communicates," and the public believes him. More than that, it *likes* him. Communicating in the strict sense of the term, however, he does hardly well at all. He so often says things not meant to be taken in quite the way he puts them, and his remark about the members of the SS being victims was surely one of these. Probably what he meant was that the SS men buried at Bitburg were only young conscripts and hence had served their monstrous masters against their will. Even that was something neither he nor anyone else could any longer know. Moreover, his remark among other questionable ideas presupposed that same dangerous lack of distinction between being conscripted to fight for one's country and relief from all responsibility for one's behavior that constituted the defense of so many war criminals at the Nuremberg trials. Thus for many days running Mr. Reagan was treated to stern lectures from the press about the several ways in which one might distinguish between the SS and unarmed murdered innocents. As for the Jews, they did not know how to express the full measure of their outrage at such a statement.

Still, once he had made the decision to go to Bitburg at all, a decision whose initial incaution was further compounded by an evident failure to predict just what it might lead him into, some such misspeaking was almost inevitable. What really was there to defend it with but gaucherie piled upon gaucherie? Be that as it may, he had succeeded precisely in drawing attention away from the achievements of West German democracy and focusing it in the exactly opposite direction. He plunged the public, as it had for some years not been plunged, into a fresh consideration of the Holocaust.

For let us face it: the word "Holocaust," even for Jews, induces by now a mostly dead sensation. The fact that there is a Holocaust commission empowered to erect monuments and create museums dedicated to that which "must not be forgotten"; the fact that a piece of sentimental grossness on television called *Holocaust* kept tens of millions of people glued to their sets; the fact that there are professors of the Holocaust and textbooks of the Holocaust; the fact that all those classic photographs of victims, most of them produced by camera-crazy Germans bent on recording their proud deeds for posterity, have become the picture postcards of a ritual tour into lost lands of suffering—all this means precisely that the Holocaust is no longer a living memory. The very word, as Raul Hilberg, himself a leading historian of the Holocaust, recently pointed out, has lost its meaning. It may now be applied anywhere and everywhere, to whichever kind of violence people currently find appalling.

But dead or alive, the Holocaust continues to sit there, athwart the history of the modern Western world. No matter how calcified and ritualistic the public response, as a historical fact this primary accomplishment of Nazism will not recede. For what remains unique about the genocidal slaughter of the Jews of Europe in the years 1939 to 1945 is not its revelation of the human capacity for mass murder—the world had often enough been presented with ample evidence of that—nor even the magnitude of the numbers involved. What makes it an incomparable and incommensurable experience is that it was an eruption of evil that could be given steady, efficient, institutionalized expression within our own, as we thought, superior civilization.

Anti-Semitism had down through the ages been a morally acceptable, in some cases even a morally requisite, feature of Christendom. But by the time of Hitler, the Western world had come to believe of itself that it had been advancing to ever higher levels of enlightenment. Nazism came to full fruition, and with very little in the way of resistance, in the very midst of that enlightened civilization. The spiritual and intellectual jolt administered by the Holocaust was in some way definitive. Anti-Semitism stood exposed as something a conscious, decent man could no longer take for granted within himself. And the Jews themselves were left with a taste of the kind of desperate strength that comes to people to whom the worst that can happen has already happened.

THE Holocaust, then, was pretty heavy stuff for a President of the United States, especially when he had so many other things on his mind, to get mixed up in.

It was also heavy stuff to be weighing upon the customarily fleeting attention span of the media. If there was wide agreement among them that the President should cancel his visit to Bitburg, and nearly universal agreement that he should change his mind and visit a concentration camp, there was, too, a fairly speedy surrender to the idea that Bitburg was fundamentally and in the main a Jewish issue. The broader reaches of general principle can sustain the media only so far; the Jewish angle, much easier and more convenient to handle, was now to take over. News stories tended more and more to focus on Jewish reactions and on White House reactions, in turn, to these. Jewish leaders were called upon to make comment in the press and—that most significant barometer of the state of play with regard to any controversy—sought out for television discussions. For their part, people purporting to speak in the name of the Jewish community as a whole declined no opportunity to declare themselves singularly affronted.

The idea that here, at bottom, was an "ethnic" issue, involving pressure for the interests of a particular segment of the population, was a convenient one not only for the media but for the White House and its defenders as well. Henceforth instead of walking some fine and eternally

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problematical line between German guilt and German innocence, the President could be seen to be treating with merely another difficult and unpleasant instance of pressure politics. The pressure, at that, was coming from a group to whom as a politician he owed little. Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger had called him to say he must not back down, lest the Europeans get the impression that he was a man who caved in to such pressure. Thus to himself, and to those on his side in this matter, he could now go to Bitburg and be justified doing it.

He could also, and not without justification, view the media's assault upon him as politically motivated. True, among those who joined the opposition were editorial-page editors who could usually be counted on to support him; but a good deal of the flak had come from sources barely able to conceal their pleasure at having caught him out once more. "Be careful what you pray for, it is said, for your prayer might be granted," wrote Washington *Post* columnist Lou Cannon on April 22 in a leading example of the phenomenon. "Reagan is now being Reagan, and the true believers are learning more than they ever wanted to know about the perils of unleashing him." In much the same spirit, Anthony Lewis of the New York *Times* wrote on April 21 that Mr. Reagan's handling of his planned visit to Germany was an extraordinary exercise in self-revelation of a man with "no sense of history" and of "shattering insensitivity." Key to this revelation in Mr. Lewis's view was that "he sees no difference between war and genocide."*

Ultimately, however, it all came back to the Jews, as both actors and audience. Their insistence on "ethnicizing" the issue of Bitburg, coupled with an inclination to question Mr. Reagan's policies anyway, was spelled out by an editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* on April 19:

> But if Mr. Reagan can be accused of insensitivity, some of his critics might be equally guilty of political cynicism. . . . Some of his attackers are a great deal less concerned about the Holocaust than about exploiting any weak spot they can find in Mr. Reagan's political armor. The primary audience for this endeavor is American Jews, torn between their predominantly liberal politics of the past and the modern appeal of hawkish neoconservatism.

This kind of identification of the Jewish community with the questionable political motives of many of the President's attackers was to lead to great irritation with the Jews on the part of many of the President's supporters. No matter how mistaken Mr. Reagan had originally been, the Jewish community, they complained, was going out of bounds.

Next, inevitably, came an older complaint, a complaint that in former days had been heard almost exclusively among Communists and their well-wishers but was now ironically issuing from such voices of the Right as Joseph Sobran's. After all, said Mr. Sobran in a syndicated column—repeating an idea whose leftist provenience, had he known enough of the history to be aware of it, might have given him pause—Jews are not the only people who have suffered. By what right do they claim special consideration?

In the span of less than a month, then, the Jews had progressed from being seen as people whose overweening sensitivity sometimes got in the way of necessary policy to being seen as no more than a self-serving pressure group, like the oil or farm lobby.

One of the least noted consequences of the view of Bitburg as a "narrow" Jewish issue is the way it deflected attention from a truly interesting question—the question of Helmut Kohl and *his* relation to Bitburg. Possibly Mr. Kohl, like Mr. Reagan, was not entirely aware of the implication of what he was asking. In 1984, it was said, he had been offended by his exclusion from the commemoration of D-Day. If "offended" is the right word—or if a more strictly political one would serve—there is something to be seen about the political predicament of present-day Germany in the fact that it should even have crossed his mind to take part in that occasion. The celebration of D-Day was after all a celebration of the invasion that led to the overwhelming defeat of his country's army. If President Reagan was caught in a confusion about the relation between wartime and postwar Germany, what shall we say of Mr. Kohl? Paradoxically, of course, the West Germans did and do have much to celebrate in the triumph of the Allied armies. Their defeat achieved for the Germans that which they had to the bitter end been unable to do for themselves: namely, to rid them of the Nazis. For their celebration to have taken the form of joining in a ceremony at Normandy would nevertheless have been, to say the least, strange, giving rise as it must logically have done to some expression of satisfaction at the death of multitudes of German soldiers. Stranger still would it have been for Mr. Kohl to imagine that the American veterans gathered on the beach in Normandy could have felt anything but the deepest embarrassment, and probably worse, to find him in their midst. He had reason to be grateful, rather than offended, to have been spared from acting on his own folly.

V-E Day, on the other hand, can in a sense be thought of as German liberation day—although from another point of view, it was also the day that sealed the partition of Germany and in the Eastern part substituted one form of totalitarian rule for another. All in all, the Chancellor's

* Those familiar with Mr. Lewis's writings on Vietnam might be somewhat taken aback by the passion with which he is now prepared to insist on this distinction.

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desperate need to take part in some joint U.S.-German ceremony connected with the war, the need to which Mr. Reagan was responding, is not without its curious side.

The Bitburg wreath-laying was to be a symbol of—the word was used over and over—"reconciliation." Why reconciliation? After forty years of American protection, alliance, and other forms of friendship, what was there to reconcile? A possible answer, though an unpleasant one, is that consciously or unconsciously the Germans are seeking forgiveness not for their conduct in the past but for what they sense will be their increasingly neutralist conduct in the future. More likely the answer is a simpler one, that they have grown bored and restless and impatient under their burden of penitence for Nazism and wish for the world, particularly the United States, to relieve them of it. Why otherwise of all possible places should the Chancellor have picked Bitburg? And why else otherwise did he, as he claimed, need to fear for his political future should Mr. Reagan refuse to appear there with him?

German restlessness and impatience one can understand: so many crimes have been committed since 1945 without much visible atonement. Above all, there, just nearby, is the Soviet Union, still going strong and without apology. But the choice of Bitburg willy-nilly betrays an impulse quite contrary to the one that had been officially articulated. To insist upon hallowing the earth that contains SS bodies is not an act that in any way serves to relieve one of penitence. Rather, it is an act that retroactively denies the need to have repented in the first place. In taking so little care for what he was inviting Mr. Reagan to do, Mr. Kohl was in effect expressing a belief that the Nazis had in the end been just plain Germans like everyone else. This happened to have been the case, we know, but surely not the case Mr. Kohl would admit to making. Thus even for a successful and punctilious statesman does the repressed sometimes, all unbidden, return.

That no one in all the hundreds of thousands of words devoted to the controversy in the press and on the air saw fit to question the curious role of Helmut Kohl and what it might mean is a tribute to the massive moral and political confusion engendered by Bitburg. The confusion was a confusion of ideas as well as attitudes, and it overtook just about everybody.

The original confusion, Chancellor Kohl's—or perhaps Germany's—lay in the hope that Ronald Reagan could in some small degree help to redo or undo German history. The Germans are a people boxed in. They have grown somewhat skittish (and not without reason) about their particular place in the Western alliance. Before them stand the Soviets. Behind them, eternally, stand the Nazis: only forty years of an available national experience stretching backward, and then . . . a black hole. The ceremony at Bitburg was implicitly to be an attempt to convert World War II into an ordinary war and so, even if only briefly, relieve the backward pressure. But neither Ronald Reagan nor God Himself has the power to do that. Had there been no ruckus in the United States, and had Mr. Reagan marched through Bitburg as planned and made a stirring and unambiguous speech, the undeniable awkwardness of the occasion would have remained. World War II was not an ordinary war, the Germans and Allied powers were not merely conventional combatants, and every German schoolchild, impatient or not, knows it. The black hole that yawns in the German consciousness when it travels back beyond 1945 cannot be filled and cannot be traversed, it can only somehow be accommodated. The intervention of outsiders can make no difference to the unspoken dialogue between the German young and the German old, not even politically. If German democracy is to survive, it will have to survive despite that dialogue, or perhaps because of it, but the dialogue itself is a strictly German affair.

RONALD REAGAN's confusion, though far more innocent than Helmut Kohl's, is no less interesting. It was first revealed in the offending remark about the victimization of the SS. Here again, in all the uproar about his alleged insensitivity and obtuseness, the most significant point was missed—that he had been driven to trade positions with his fiercest opponents, the pious liberals. What he said about those members of the SS in effect was that they had been made to commit crimes by the conditions of their society. To deem an armed man who is committing a murderous assault no less a victim than the unarmed innocent he murders—a victim, as they say, of his environment—is to maintain the very same view of criminal behavior that Mr. Reagan's bitterest enemies have been promulgating since time out of mind (and to which his election to the Presidency was itself a public act of resistance).

This much the pressure on him achieved: along with Bitburg, he went to Bergen-Belsen. Within an afternoon, he made two speeches, one at each place, speeches declared by many to be the most moving and effective of a career that had produced not a few. In view of all the turmoil that had preceded them, one may suppose that these speeches were crafted with extreme care. The cameras were in full array at their delivery, and the whole world was watching. So intent was everyone on the question of how he would make his way rhetorically through all the perils lying in wait for him, there seemed to be little notice of the actual intellectual and political ground on which he decided to stand.

Exactly how he had arrived at the choice of Bergen-Belsen we do not know. Dachau would have made the day's travels, strenuous enough as they were, a feat of endurance. Moreover, Dachau

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had been turned down; going there would have suggested not compromise but surrender. However he made the choice, Bergen-Belsen was, if such a term may be used in this connection, a happy one. Both Dachau and Bergen-Belsen were long ago cleaned up and converted to museums. But the Bergen-Belsen site consists only of plaques, monuments, and memorial displays. Dachau would have been another matter. There he would have had a view of something that might have made his message of brotherhood falter on his tongue. That something is the ovens. The ovens bear a secret better left unrevealed to someone who means to speak as the President did. The secret of the ovens—which in our own time leaves only those wild-eyed Cambodian adolescents of the Khmer Rouge humanly comparable to the Germans who designed, staffed, and operated the camps—is their size.

The word Holocaust, among its other inadequacies, conjures a vision of a vast fiery pit or furnace. It is possible to imagine almost anyone in a mere fit of temporary insanity having a hand in throwing bodies into such a mythic conflagration. But the main instruments of the real Holocaust, gas chamber and oven, were not vast at all. They were shockingly, and instructively, small. They were, that is, man-sized, requiring the constant, competent, daily attentions of reliable workmen. The gas chambers at Dachau are the size of, say, an ordinary living room—why waste space when the job of killing by gas is so quickly done? And the ovens are just that, ovens, small chambers into which bodies had to be deposited one by one from a kind of barrow loaded and lifted by two men. The job of overseeing the incineration of human corpses was, in other words, a *personal* one. The murder of millions was a work accomplished by ordinary, everyday fiends. They are the ghosts that Germany to this day struggles to lay, and no outsider can contribute to the exorcism.

So in going to Bergen-Belsen instead of Dachau Mr. Reagan had made a good choice. Unfair as it may be to the new and free and democratic West Germany of today, it is better not to visit Dachau on a day one intends to embrace the Germans. Simply not enough years have yet gone by.

BERGEN-BELSEN made him sufficiently uncomfortable. He stumbled in his speech there a couple of times, and in the course of his tour of the place looked like nothing so much as a man whose privacy was being invaded by the cameras. No one as clearly genial and affable as Ronald Reagan, experienced actor though he be, can look at such mementos as the stones marking mass graves, or photographs of starved, naked corpses lying in carefully arranged heaps, and figure out something graceful to do with his face and hands and shoulders.

At the Bitburg cemetery he was, for obvious reasons, positively stiff with expressionlessness. Not until he reached the air base did he commence to look like the figure the American public recognizes as its Great Communicator.

He did, however, as might have been expected, have a number of graceful things to say. His words were aimed at striking just the right note of balanced acknowledgment of the hopelessness and hopefulness of which the day was to be a reminder—of the utter and total despair that had been the lot of millions under the Nazis and the promise signalized in the reclamation of Germany. But if graceful, these speeches nevertheless revealed something rather odd in the way of underlying attitude. Odd, that is, for Ronald Reagan in particular. For at every point where it was possible to do so, he eschewed the concrete nature of the reality to which he was addressing himself and took refuge instead in the vague and general.

Recourse to generality in the face of the concrete is, morally speaking, the rankest of the rank habits of present-day liberalism. "The brotherhood of man," a liberal favorite, is an attitude of mind that liberates one precisely from the need to regard specific men as one's brothers. "Peace on earth," another, involves one in none of the difficult and sometimes dirty details of how to respond to this or that specific aggression. And so it goes, upward and downward through the whole range of human experiences. It is a basic principle of progressive liberal thought that when confronted with the reality that is under your nose, you must raise your eyes heavenward and refrain above all from giving that reality its own individual name. People become "classes" and the complex network of their relations to one another become "social problems." Evasion of the concrete is ultimately the evasion of any and every single person's responsibility to the truth. At the moment, the use of the generalized terms "racism" and "sexism" constitutes just such an evasion.

And refrain from giving the reality under his nose its own exact name is precisely what Ronald Reagan did on that Sunday afternoon in Germany. At Bergen-Belsen, for instance, he mentioned the word "Jews" once, and made haste to include "many Christians—Catholics and Protestants" among those who perished there, lumping the Final Solution together with the political persecution of individuals into one undifferentiated mass of brutality. He spoke of suffering, of hunger, of consuming misery, and of death. But he omitted mention of the policy, thought out and fully articulated, of the organized, systematic, scientific murder of the entire Jewish population, left incomplete only by circumstance and not by intention, and he omitted mention of the impressive fact that this policy was given top priority even when it was militarily counterproductive to pursue it.

At the Bitburg air base he spoke the passage, perhaps aimed at the kind of permanent fame achieved by the remark of John F. Kennedy on

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which it was based: ". . . I am a Berliner, I am a Jew in a world still threatened by anti-Semitism, I am an Afghan, and I am a prisoner of the Gulag, I am a refugee in a crowded boat foundering off the coast of Vietnam, I am a Laotian, a Cambodian, a Cuban, and a Miskito Indian in Nicaragua." It may seem ungracious to point out that John F. Kennedy's declaration of oneness with the citizens of Berlin was made as he stood at the wall dividing their hapless city, the very wall whose construction he had not lifted a finger to stop. And it will no doubt seem positively cantankerous to point out that the groups listed by Mr. Reagan are not all the same as one another, nor have they all equally been the beneficiaries of American (not to say German) solidarity. One thing they do have in common: it is the Soviets and their surrogates who are mainly responsible for their condition. This is a fact it is certainly appropriate to bring home on every occasion, and never more so than in the presence of the Germans. But only someone caught up in the old liberal urge to speak of suffering in the large so as to make all suffering equal would have seen fit to express the idea in quite this way on just this occasion.

In addressing the German question as such, Mr. Reagan barely ventured beyond the war, and treated that as if it were not a war but a war movie. Nazism he referred to as "one man's totalitarian dictatorship" without either naming the man or offering the slightest suggestion of something made perfectly obvious at Bergen-Belsen, even among the neat and abstract memorials: that this one man needed and received a fair amount of cooperation from others.

For him to have spoken with the required precision might not have been fully satisfactory to Mr. Reagan's hosts. But who can say for sure? There is that in people who are being forgiven which yearns to know just what they are being forgiven for. In any case, Nazism, which had once, in Mr. Reagan's words, "turned the world upside down," in this odd and entirely unnoticed way turned him upside down as well.

As for American Jews, forgiving the Germans is not and has not for a very long time now been much of a problem. It is the forgetting—their own as well as others'—that troubles them. A basic article of faith with them is that the world must remember what happened to the Jews. Even more, they wish for the world to be guided by that memory in its dealings with them. Such a wish, however, has created confusions of its own; and these confusions, too, along with Helmut Kohl's and Ronald Reagan's, played a role in the Bitburg controversy.

First, there is the confusion, so harshly and so grossly responded to by certain of Mr. Reagan's defenders, between the Jews' claim of unique title to the Holocaust and their insistence at the same time that the Holocaust be understood as a universal issue of good and evil. Are they, in other words, a holy witness or a special pressure group? The answer, nearly as difficult for the Jews as for others to keep clearly in mind, is that by virtue of their peculiar history they are both. While they were by no means the only victims of the Nazis, they were a special kind of victim. On the other hand, the nature and the scope of the cataclysm that was theirs was also, in the deepest spiritual as well as moral sense, the West's. Thus they lobby in their own interest and yet are not in the ordinary sense a lobby.

But people, and especially, it would seem, Jews, do not always know where their true interest lies. And here is buried another, and far more significant, confusion. The Jewish expression of determination never to forget does in some cases appear to mask a considerable degree of forgetfulness.

What does it mean to "remember" the Holocaust? If it means anything serious, anything beyond mere ritual, it requires a continuing alertness to certain political and social lessons. There is, for instance, the lesson of Weimar, which is a lesson about how fragile and in need of constant loving protection are the institutions of a decent civilization. Any Jew who permits himself, as so many Jews nowadays do, to grow careless with these institutions, to demand of them more than they can perform while simultaneously becoming ever more tolerant of the kinds of decadence that destroy them, has forgotten the Holocaust. There is the lesson of Munich, which is a lesson about the need to resist totalitarianism early and with strength. Any Jew who decrees, as many Jews nowadays do, that the democracies should divest themselves of the power to threaten and discipline intransigent totalitarianism, especially of the Soviet variety, has forgotten the Holocaust. Any Jew who believes, as many Jews nowadays do, that Israel must extend a hand of appeasing friendship to those who have sworn to destroy it, or who indulges himself in the luxury of waiting until the very survival of Israel is threatened before he makes his commitment to that survival clear, has forgotten the Holocaust—and forgotten himself as well.

The special role that the Jews, justly, would claim for themselves in the history of the Nazi era involves them, whether they acknowledge it or not, in a special obligation: not, as so many like to say, an obligation to be more "compassionate" than others but to be even more clear-eyed than others about the dangers to democracy in our own age.

If Bitburg was a political embarrassment to Ronald Reagan, and far from a triumph for Helmut Kohl, for Jews it was an opportunity—for many too many a lost one—to make it clear to themselves just how stern and relentless is the real task of remembering the Holocaust and keeping faith with their dead.

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Fighting Back

Michael Ledeen

In the 1970's the Soviet Union embarked upon an ambitious program of using proxy forces to expand its international power. Cubans entered Africa in the tens of thousands, from Angola to Ethiopia, from Somalia to South Yemen and Libya. This tactic was a great success, with the Communists in Angola and Ethiopia defeating their internal (and, in the case of Angola, American-backed) opponents, and the Communist regime in South Yemen serving as a major training base for international terrorism. In the same period, the Soviets gave clandestine support to a vast international terrorist center in Lebanon, employing the PLO and other radical Arab forces as the infrastructure for the operation.

Nor was Lebanon the only such center. Radical Arab states, including Libya, Syria, Iran, and Iraq, organized their own terrorist support and training centers, sometimes with Soviet help, sometimes on their own, sending killers of different ideological and religious hues to strike down Israeli, American, French, and other Western targets throughout the world.

In our own hemisphere the pattern held. Once the Sandinistas came to power in Nicaragua, the same proxies, with covert support from the Soviet bloc, flowed through Cuba into Managua to organize the guerrilla assaults against Central and Latin America. Thanks to captured documents from Grenada,* and recently-captured papers from a leader of the guerrillas in El Salvador, we can trace in great detail the role of these proxies in organizing, training, and commanding the Soviet-sponsored war to our South.

What should the United States do in the face of this challenge?

The direct use of massive American military power, even in situations where it might be the most effective response, is so politically controversial that no President can be expected to order it unless it is clearly proportionate to the provocation; and even then he is unlikely to do so unless he believes that the struggle will be quite short and a successful outcome a virtual certainty. He might send American armed forces to fight in Grenada against a few Cubans and local militiamen, but he is not going to send American soldiers to fight Cubans in Angola or Sandinistas in El Salvador, Honduras, or Nicaragua itself. After all, when 55 American military advisers were sent to El Salvador, there was a vociferous cry of "another Vietnam," followed by congressional insistence that our Salvadoran allies be certified as morally upright every 90 days. One can then imagine the uproar over the deployment of American fighting men against proxy forces. Clearly, in many of these cases, we need to find a different response.

One obvious and traditional method is to help anti-Soviet or anti-Communist local forces. This has several advantages over the commitment of our armed personnel: our involvement is limited to providing assistance, and therefore is not likely to draw the United States into direct conflict; we are clearly helping people who themselves are committed to the cause, because it is they who risk their lives and fight the actual battles; and, finally, it is a symmetrical response, a measured "punishment" that seems to fit the crime committed by the hostile proxies in the first place. If the Soviets can recruit the likes of Castro, Arafat, and Ortega to do their work for them, if the Ayatollah Khomeini can organize suicide squads through his Shiite followers all over the Middle East, and if Qaddafi can send hired gunmen against Western targets and his own émigrés, why should the United States be barred from supporting others who wish to fight for our common objectives?

The problem is not a lack of opportunity. In the major theaters of action over the past decade there have been many willing allies: no fewer than two vigorous groups, one led by Jonas Savimbi

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* Available in *The Grenada Documents*, edited by Michael Ledeen and Herbert Romerstein (U.S. Departments of State and Defense) and *The Grenada Papers*, edited by Paul Seabury and Walter A. McDougall (Institute for Contemporary Studies); see the discussion by Arch Puddington in "Totalitarianism Today," Commentary, December 1984. —Ed.

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and the other by Holden Roberto, in Angola; various anti-Shiite forces in Lebanon; and the former allies of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, from Arturo Cruz to Edén Pastora, along with other governments in the region who recognize the gravity of the Nicaraguan threat.

Yet despite such abundant opportunities, we have rarely been able to mount an effective campaign. Our Central American policy of bringing the fight to the Sandinistas, although it has achieved a largely unacknowledged degree of success, is now treading water, and continues mainly because of private-sector funding of the *contras* rather than because of any significant American governmental action. By most informed accounts, the Afghans are receiving only a fraction of what they need to punish the Soviets for their invasion. Savimbi is the undeclared winner in the war for Angola, but it is no thanks to us. Qaddafi in Libya sleeps uneasily because his own people wish to remove him, not because of anything we have done. And the international terror network has yet to receive a blow from the United States, even though hundreds of Americans have fallen, and the number of American hostages mounts steadily, with the hijacking of TWA Flight 847 only the most publicized in a long series of similar aggressions.

THE main source of this singular failure lies in the fact that such indirect use of American power necessarily involves a certain degree of secret or covert activity, and there is a deep-seated conviction among Americans that covert activity is in itself sinister, and that any secret effort by the United State to challenge our enemies is bound to be morally demeaning.

The view of the world behind this conviction reached its apogee at the time of Watergate, when the late Senator Frank Church and former Congressman Otis Pike headed congressional commissions that investigated the past sins of the CIA. That period—and the chilling Carter years that reaped the Watergate harvest—provided the basic elements in the still ongoing national debate over both covert action and a more vigorous policy generally.

Church and Pike, delving deeply into the most secret activities of the United States, concluded that the CIA had become a "rogue elephant" which had to be brought under control. As a result, congressional oversight committees were established in great numbers (at one time, the intelligence community had to brief no fewer than eight separate committees—four in each house—on its programs). Past secret activities of the CIA were also paraded before the public, resulting in the departure of some of the highest-ranking officials of the Agency (counterintelligence chief James Angleton, for one) and the excoriation of others like former director Richard Helms.

So great was the hostility to covert programs that the Senate took the extraordinary step of passing a law forbidding clandestine support for the two pro-Western factions in the Angolan civil war, thereby guaranteeing the triumph of the Communist MPLA (better that a Soviet proxy should win than that we should tarnish our hands by secretly aiding Savimbi and Roberto).

In addition, following the discovery that President Kennedy had authorized attempts to murder Fidel Castro and that he might also have approved the murder of Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem (as well as the unfounded suspicion that Richard Nixon had somehow been involved in the murder of Salvador Allende in Chile), President Ford issued an executive order declaring that assassination, or any action that facilitated assassination, was off-limits to officials, agents, and representatives of the American government.

The Carter administration took this trend to its logical conclusion. Thus Carter's director of the CIA, Admiral Stansfield Turner, provoked the departure of roughly 800 clandestine agents by offering them a choice between voluntary early retirement and being driven out. The point was clear enough: the sort of thing that *those* people did was no longer acceptable in this country, and once the capacity for covert action were eliminated, the temptation to make use of it would be automatically purged.

And indeed Carter greatly reduced the number of covert operations, and even went so far as to intervene with friendly countries to prevent actions against our mutual enemies (the most dramatic case being his veto of a plan by Egypt under Anwar Sadat to attack Qaddafi's Libya). Evidently, if American foreign policy were to be raised to a new moral plane, we would have to hold our allies and friends to similarly high standards, even if this meant that our enemies would continue to flourish.

Under the Reagan administration, some of the most devastating practices of the past ten years have been undone, and others have been mitigated. There are now only two oversight committees, and from time to time one hears calls for more vigorous support of friends, allies, and proxies. Yet one cannot say that there has been a fundamental rethinking of our position. Although the Clark Amendment, which forbids support for anti-Communist movements in Angola, has come under serious challenge in both the House and the Senate, the principle embodied in the Amendment has been extended to Central America, where Congress has prohibited American support of any group that aims at the overthrow of the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua.

In the important field of counterterrorism, assassination—even of known killers of Americans—remains unacceptable, and the slightest hint that the United States might secretly support foreign groups who want to strike back at those who

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have murdered our people is greeted with the same cries of scandal and outrage that were heard in the 70's. Thus, when it was discovered that the CIA had worked with a Lebanese intelligence organization that in turn had been responsible for bombing the headquarters of Hezbollah—the radical Shiite terrorist group that appears to have been a prime mover in the murders of hundreds of Americans in Lebanon over the past few years and in the holding of hostages from TWA Flight 847—even this remote involvement of the American government was roundly condemned by members of Congress, by much of the media, and by former officials of the Carter administration.*

IT IS often difficult to tell if the critics object to our efforts to fight back, or only to the methods that are employed.

Occasionally, for example, one hears it said that if we must support groups like the Afghan resistance or the *contras,* we ought at least to do it openly. But this misses the essential point about such assistance. Secrecy is often required, not because we have anything to be ashamed of, but because those who are actually doing the fighting wish for reasons of their own to keep our relationship secret.

Thus in the case of the Afghan resistance, the key act of courage has to be performed not in Washington but in Islamabad, where President Zia of Pakistan is regularly treated to explicit threats from the Soviet Union. It is he who faces the Red Army across his border, and it is he who must decide how much space, how much money, how much ammunition, and how many weapons he will permit the Afghans to receive in and through his country. To make public American financial assistance to the Afghans is to expose Zia, thereby greatly increasing the chances that he will hedge his bet by moderating the program that we so badly want to succeed.

The stakes for Zia are quite different from those in Washington. For him, it is a question of survival; for American politicians, intellectuals, and journalists, the question of covert support is generally treated as if it were a matter of American ethics alone. By framing the debate in terms of American public morality, the question is taken out of its proper context, and becomes systematically distorted. We should be asking what the best way is to combat Soviet expansionism in Afghanistan; instead we are asking whether it is proper for the U.S. to keep its activities secret.

Similarly, in Central America, every country feels mortally threatened by the Sandinistas, and in their hearts all Central American leaders would like to see the Managua regime either removed or rendered significantly less threatening than it is today. Not only do the Sandinistas now boast an army that is larger than the sum total of all the other armies in the region, they support and control guerrilla movements in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.

Quite logically, the government of Honduras is willing to permit its territory to be used by the *contras.* But equally logically, the Hondurans are loath to see these activities—and our support for them—become public knowledge. Insofar as they do become public knowledge, the chances of Sandinista incursions into Honduran territory are increased, and ammunition is lent to domestic opponents of the current government. Finally, given our record of abandoning allies under siege, the Hondurans (and who can blame them?) desperately wish to retain the option of coming to terms with the Sandinistas if we bail out of Central America. They may need to deny their own active involvement at some later date, and to condemn us for secretly operating in their country.

Quite aside from the convenience of our allies, there are often important reasons to keep American support secret. On many occasions, if we took open action, we might invite a large-scale war. Without the ability to wage this form of intermediate conflict, our government would be left with a choice between mere talk and direct military confrontation.

BUT the prejudice against secrecy is not the only obstacle to our efforts to respond in kind to the proxy assault. Thus Senator Patrick Leahy says that if we are going to take action against terrorists, we should do it ourselves and not get mixed up with unsavory groups such as the one in Lebanon that bombed Hezbollah.

Yet just as the critics of secrecy in effect leave us with no possibility of effective action, so those who attack our attempts to recruit allies in the war against terrorism erect standards that in practice lead either to paralysis or to failure.

To fight back against terrorists, we need first-class information about their intentions, and this information can only come from people who are on intimate terms with the terrorists. For the most part, this means that we either have to infiltrate the terrorist groups (which can only be done if the infiltrators commit terrorist acts themselves) or recruit active terrorists directly. In short, we have no choice but to work with some unsavory types, even if our objective is limited to gathering information. (Here, incidentally, is another area in which secrecy is an absolute requirement of success, since the survival of our informants is at stake.)

Nor will it "solve" the problem to say, as Sena-

* One should not leave the impression that the only opposition lies outside the administration. One of the most damaging legacies of Watergate has been the now-habitual recourse of government officials who happen to disapprove of a given policy or action to leak information about it to the press. In the case of actions which require secrecy to be effective, the results can be, and have been, devastating.

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tor Leahy does, that we should use our own people, rather than proxies, to strike at the terrorists. In the first place, to repeat, taking action directly entails the risk of an all-out war—and while under certain circumstances a reprisal against, say, Syria or Iran might be worth the risk, under other circumstances the risk might be better avoided.

In the second place, if Americans are going to operate against terrorists in the Middle East, the requirements for detailed information become even greater than before, thus putting us once again in the hands of terrorists who are willing to collaborate with us. Furthermore, there are times when it is simply impossible for Americans to enter places with reasonable safety, while locals have a much better chance.

Many of the same considerations apply to the highly-charged subject of assassination. There was great outrage when it was discovered that the CIA-financed "manual" that was apparently being used to train some of the *contras* suggested the possibility of "neutralizing" selected political and military commissars of the Sandinistas. The implication of the uproar was that it might be all right to train men in warfare, but not to kill specific individuals. This is of a piece with the confusions surrounding the use of proxies in counterterrorism, and the necessity of secrecy. For the blanket rejection of assassination risks actions, either by Americans or by proxies, that will lead to greater violence, and more death, especially of innocent bystanders.

To take the Nicaraguan case first: selectively targeting the leaders of the Sandinista armed forces, or their Cuban, East German, Libyan, and Palestinian advisers, is certainly preferable to the obvious alternative, which is large-scale assaults against the conscripted armed forces of Nicaragua, with inevitable harm to the civilian population. And where Afghanistan is concerned, ruling out any American involvement with assassination would mean encouraging the Afghan resistance to engage in all-out assaults against the Red Army, rather than selectively going after the Soviet commanders and "advisers."

As for counterterrorism: suppose that we knew the names and addresses of the persons who organized the terrorist bombings of the American Marine barracks and the American embassy in Beirut, or those who hijacked TWA Flight 847. Under the blanket prohibition of assassination, it is illegal to organize a "hit team" or resort to other methods to kill those persons individually. However, it *is* legal to strike at a military target, so we could, for example, bomb a "facility" in which they train other terrorists, or perhaps where their headquarters are located. Yet bombing buildings risks the deaths of many other people, especially when we recall that terrorists in Lebanon generally place their headquarters in hospitals, schools, and churches, thus ensuring that anyone who attempts to attack them will automatically kill innocent women, children, doctors, nurses, and priests.

One is left with the suspicion that the moralistic complaints against secrecy, or against the unpleasant necessities of counterterrorism and of the war against Soviet-sponsored proxies in Central America, are nothing more than excuses for abandoning any serious attempt by the United States to fight back. If the critics both in and out of Congress are not prepared to support armed struggle against enemy proxies, whether in Central America or in the shadowy realm of the terrorist war, so be it. But they should not be permitted to hide sanctimoniously behind the current rationalizations for refusing to do anything effective against a dangerous challenge to the interests and security of the United States.

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On Jewish Forebodings

Nathan Glazer

STUDENTS of American Jewry confront an interesting paradox: a sociological literature filled with forebodings about a group whose history, by all relevant measures, has gone very well indeed. I exaggerate, of course; sociological writings on America's Jews contain much more than forebodings of disaster. Yet it does seem true that a whole line of sociologists, among whom I would have to place myself, have been uneasy about the Jewish future in the United States. What has the course of events done to sustain or refute those fears?

My own involvement with these matters began in the early 1940's. I was then a member of Avukah, the American Student Zionist Federation, and the editor of its newspaper. To be involved in Avukah was to be something of a social scientist as well as a political activist. For Avukah prided itself on the degree to which its political positions were based on a social-scientific analysis of the condition of American Jewry. Avukah did not concern itself with the prospects for Jewish culture or Jewish religion: to the Avukah theorists, these were only emanations of economics and politics, and it was to economics and politics that our hard-headed, somewhat Marxist analysis of reality was applied.

At this time the United States was (barely) emerging from the Depression, and to the extent that it was doing so its emergence could be ascribed to preparations for war. There was widespread discrimination against Jews, which meant radically diminished opportunities for entry into medical schools and elite undergraduate colleges, for employment in leading law firms, for appointments to hospitals or university faculties. Anti-Semitic meetings were regularly conducted on the streets of New York and Boston; Jews were beaten up. There were thus reasons, aside from Zionist ideology, for the theorists of Avukah to conclude as we did that the situation of American Jews was perilous. According to our analysis, the threat of fascism and the existing reality of anti-Semitism meant that Jews could never be safe or realize their full potential in the United States, at least as long as they did not possess a "non-minority" center in Palestine.

In this, as history has demonstrated, we were wrong. Yet in the early 1940's we were hardly the only ones preoccupied with the issue of anti-Semitism in the United States. This was, basically, the subject of the most authoritative work on American Jews in the prewar period, *Jews in a Gentile World,* edited by Steuart Henderson Britt and Isacque Graeber (1942). And after the war as well, the major sociological work undertaken by American Jewish organizations similarly dealt with anti-Semitism. This was the series of studies conducted under Max Horkheimer by the American Jewish Committee and under Kurt Lewin by the American Jewish Congress. The most prominent and impressive of these studies was *The Authoritarian Personality,* by Theodor Adorno and others (1950). The greatest disaster in Jewish history had just occurred; what, the social scientists wanted to know, had caused it? What were the roots of anti-Semitism? What if anything exempted the United States from falling prey to it?

The research for these studies was conducted under the overall guidance of refugees from Europe; American social scientists worked on them, but often in a subordinate capacity. The prognosis was not optimistic. According to *The Authoritarian Personality,* anti-Semitism stemmed from a basic character structure linked to the competitiveness and pressures of capitalist society. Since no one expected this form of society to change soon (not in the United States, at any rate), the same authoritarian personalities would continue to emerge, with their irrepressible tendency to blame their problems on others. Owing to a complex history, these others were more likely to be Jews than anyone else.

One of the variants of this theory, developed by Bruno Bettelheim and Morris Janowitz, went beyond the competitive pressures of modern life

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to point to social change itself as a source of hostility to outgroups. Downward social mobility led to anger and resentment; upward social mobility had similar effects. One outlet was anti-Semitism.

During the McCarthy period, these theories were very popular, and sociologists and historians made use of them to explain the McCarthy phenomenon itself. Their articles and studies were collected by Daniel Bell and Richard Hofstadter in *The New American Right,* and later, in a revised edition by Daniel Bell, in *The Radical Right*. David Riesman, Seymour Martin Lipset, and I contributed to these anthologies. We noted that there was nothing anti-Semitic about McCarthy and his colleagues—indeed, there were quite a few Jews among his entourage and his supporters. But social-psychological analysis suggested that this was only a modest variation from the norm. Jews, we concluded, were on the whole correct to fear the anti-Semitic potential of McCarthyism.

It is now thirty years since the McCarthy phenomenon, and new Rights have arisen in place of his radical Right; indeed, an administration is now in power that is supported by the newest radical Right. To judge by the November 1984 election returns, Jews are still suspicious, and still fearful. Nevertheless, there is no clear relation between the rise of this Right and anti-Semitism. *The Authoritarian Personality* and the fears it actualized and anticipated are now, for the most part, history.

Thus, one great expectation, that anti-Semitism would play a significant role in American politics, has been falsified. This is not to say the issue could not appear again, but we have seen a shift in the last forty years from a period when there were figures on the national scene who were quite openly anti-Semitic to one in which anti-Semitism generally gets into politics by way of a charge that one's opponent has not been sufficiently denunciatory of someone *else* accused of anti-Semitism. By the standards of Jewish history, anti-Semitism as a political force has never been so reduced as it is in the United States today.

One demonstration of this fact is the very large number of Jews who run for high office, without a hint that anti-Semitism is a factor in their winning or losing. Indeed, over the past few decades a substantial change has occurred in the number and kind of elected Jewish officials. Fifty years ago, the chances were that a Jewish Congressman represented a predominantly Jewish constituency. There are very few such constituencies today, but there are more Jewish Congressmen and Senators than ever. They get into office the same way other people do, and their Jewish background seems to play little role in affecting their political careers.

If political fears have not been realized, neither have economic fears. During and after World War II, social scientists expected another great Depression. The last one, after all, had never been really beaten; unemployment remained high until World War II. The prevailing view was that Jews suffered most in economic depressions. They were concentrated in small businesses—and businesses fail in a depression. They had only recently gotten footholds in law firms and other sorts of places—last hired, they would be first fired. Economic analyses of the Jewish economic future in the 1940's and 1950's were thus almost uniformly gloomy. Almost uniformly, they failed to predict the remarkable economic rise of Jews in the past four decades.

In the 1960's, at the height of the postwar period of unparalleled prosperity, social scientists rediscovered poverty in America. One would think that, the facts of Jewish affluence being what they were, the Jewish community would have blessed its good fortune and resolved to help those less well off. In large part that is what the community did do. But Jewish organizations also busily began to seek *Jewish* poverty in America; and sure enough, they found it. American Jews, after all, were on average an older population, and old people in retirement had difficulty maintaining their former incomes. Thus one could find a surprisingly substantial number of Jews in poverty. Later it was realized that while many old people are poor, they also have fewer needs, and even a poverty-level income may not mean for them what it does for a family with young children. In any case, the one great success of the War on Poverty was the almost total abolition of poverty among the elderly, thanks to increases in Social Security and Medicare—so the fear of widespread Jewish poverty proved similarly unfounded.

In the later 1960's a more serious concern arose over the Jewish economic future: affirmative action and reverse discrimination. Most Jewish organizations opposed a strict statistical basis for allocating positions in higher education and in employment—quotas—as a matter of principle, but there were pragmatic considerations as well. Jews were already "overrepresented" in the institutions that were becoming battlegrounds of affirmative action. They formed 10 percent of college professors, more like 20 to 30 percent in the elite academic institutions; they represented probably 10 percent or more of medical students and law students nationwide, 20 percent or more in the elite institutions. If it were to be generally conceded that each ethnic/racial group should be represented proportionately in such institutions, what would happen to the overrepresented? The situation in law and medical schools raised the sharpest worry: and it was thus the *De Funis* and *Bakke* cases that brought out Jewish opposition.

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(When, with the *Weber* case, the litigation reached skilled labor, most Jewish organizations declined to become involved: that was not a Jewish problem.)

Was the worry misplaced? Since Jews make up less than 3 percent of the nation's population, the logic of affirmative action certainly pointed in the direction of hurting Jewish interests, or rather the interests of individual Jews. But 50 percent of the country is also female, and females were one of the groups designated as beneficiaries of affirmative action. Thus, if one wanted to draw up a balance sheet, one could argue that Jewish women were as much helped by affirmative action as Jewish men were hurt, or helped even more than Jewish men were hurt.

In any event, if affirmative action meant a decline in the number of Jews admitted to elite institutions, this was, in the main, scarcely evident. Moreover, law and medicine and teaching do not exhaust the range of economic opportunity in America. Many a son—or daughter—of a prosperous Jewish doctor, lawyer, businessman, or professor was now becoming interested in journalism, or the arts, or the burgeoning field of management. The simple diversity of Jewish occupational choices worked to mitigate the effects of affirmative action in specific areas.

Thus, affirmative action did not turn out to be that great a threat to Jews—or so I would now conclude. Rather, it was (and remains) a threat to our traditional American conception of justice, in which the standard of measurement is the individual, not the group. In a larger perspective, a threat of this kind certainly has consequences for Jews, as it does for all citizens, but not for Jews more than others. So far, then, this particular fear is another one that has not been realized.

We come to a third area, the demographic and religious future of American Jewry. The first sociologists of ethnicity in American life, the scholars at the University of Chicago whose major figure was Robert E. Park, believed that, for Jews and for other groups similarly situated, the removal of discrimination and the abatement of prejudice would issue in a gradual movement toward assimilation. When there was more interaction among groups, distinctive practices would decline and common habits would increasingly prevail.

In the 20's and 30's, when Park was writing, assimilation was not necessarily a bad word for many Jews. Reform Judaism, which was a strong force in Jewish life, was much closer to liberal Protestantism in its practices and attitudes than it is today. The Jewish labor movement, which concerned itself solely with improving the material condition of Jewish workers, was another force for assimilation. As for the anti-assimilationists, whether religious or Zionist, they did not yet have on their side the powerful negative argument of the failure of assimilation in Germany. Thus the major work on American Jews to be produced by the Park circle, Louis Wirth's *The Ghetto*, was unabashedly assimilationist. Distinctive Jewish practices, Wirth posited, were backward and medieval, and they would and should change under the influence of interaction with other Americans.

If it seemed reasonable to expect that Jews would become less different, and less "Jewish," over time, it was also to be expected that there would be fewer Jews. Jewish birth rates were surprisingly low; one could not rely on mass immigration on the scale of the first two decades of the century; and (by the 1960's) studies began to show an extremely high rate of intermarriage. This, too, was predictable. If Jews were no longer going to City College and Hunter but Harvard, the University of Chicago, and UCLA, they would be meeting more non-Jews. Similarly as they entered occupations not dominated by Jews.

Expectations of assimilation were thus matched by expectations of fewer Jews. Indeed, over the last decade or so, concern with intermarriage and the demographic future of the Jewish people has replaced the old concern with political anti-Semitism and economic discrimination. The work of sociologists like Marshall Sklare, Steven M. Cohen, and Calvin Goldscheider reflects this shift. But there is not yet a consensus of opinion on what the future holds. If it was once thought that decline was inevitable, we are now hearing an intriguing counterargument. As Calvin Goldscheider and Alan Zuckerman frame the issue in their new book, *The Transformation of the Jews:**

> Every indicator reveals how Jews have become modern and American in the 1980's. Rapid and high levels of modernization, large concentrations of Jews in a context of ethnic and religious pluralism distant from immigrant status, raise the question of how these structural changes impinge on the community as a group. Does change imply the assimilation of Jews and the demise of the Jewish community? Are there new forms emerging that extend, replace, and redefine Jewishness? Along with the dramatic changes and transformations, are there emerging patterns which are the bases of new forms of Jewish cohesion?

Our evidence for answering these questions is not very good. We do know enough now to dismiss the easy answer that adaptation to the United States means the simple decline of Jews and Jewishness; but we do not know enough to settle the question of what *kind* of Jews, and what kind of Jewishness, will survive.

Let us begin with the easier part of the prob-

* Reviewed by David Singer in the July COMMENTARY—ED.

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lem: how many Jews will there be in the United States? The answer seems clear: fewer than there are now. The Jewish proportion of the American population peaked at 3.6 percent in 1927. If Jews had maintained that percentage, there would be two million more Jews in the United States than there are today. Jewish birth rates are very low. And immigration, which has historically helped maintain the Jewish population, cannot, in the nature of the case, be very large. If the vitality of a community is based on its numerical strength, as it is in part, all this is quite troubling.

But there are other sources of vitality. Political influence, for example, does not depend on numbers alone; certainly no one would argue that Jewish influence was greater in 1927 than it is in 1985, despite the proportionate decline in the percentage of Jews. And as I have already noted, there are far more Jews elected to Congress today than in the past, when Jews were proportionately more numerous. Then, too, quality may count more than quantity—quality in terms of the numbers of highly educated Jews, Jews in important professions, wealthy Jews.

Nor are the figures on intermarriage completely unambiguous. Something like one-third of Jews marrying today marry non-Jews. This was once taken as a clear loss, but more recent studies have suggested that almost as many people are brought into the community through intermarriage as are lost to it. Many non-Jewish spouses convert, many children of intermarriages are raised as Jews. If these figures reach close to 50 percent, the net result may be a wash.

When we come to indices of Jewish cohesion—involvement in the community and its concerns—the matter becomes more complicated still. We know that as Jews move from the immigrant generation to the second generation to the third generation, the numbers identifying with traditional Jewish practices and allegiances decline, and so does the intensity of their commitment. Not that the measures of decline are all self-evident. For instance, the fact that there is no longer a vibrant Yiddish press does not necessarily signify a diminution of Jewish commitment. Jewish communities have led their lives in many languages, and if American Jews now overwhelmingly speak English, this does not by itself mean that they are less Jewish. By some measures, indeed, there is a higher degree of Jewish identification today than ever before—witness the rising proportion of children attending all-day Jewish schools. Still, one would need to know more in order to determine the significance of this, and specifically one would need to know the objective: is it to get away from poor public schools, to provide an identity that parents do not feel self-confident enough to provide themselves, or what?

Consider, too, the commitment to Israel, which is often cited in sociological studies as an index of Jewish identity. Israel has become the center of American Jewish life, and provides a focus for that life that did not exist, let us say, in the 1920's. Indeed, it did not even exist to the same degree during the first twenty years of Israel's life. In that period, strangely enough, Israel appeared to need less from American Jews, who devoted more of their energies to institution-building here in the United States, as the Jewish community moved en masse from the inner cities to the suburbs.

Since the Six-Day War of 1967 Israel has engrossed a larger and larger portion of American Jewish concern. (It has also become an ever larger issue in external and internal American politics generally.) We have many surveys reporting what American Jews think of Israel, and all demonstrate how close they feel to it. But this raises another question, which has been of concern to Jewish scholars and community leaders: just what does Jewish life mean to American Jews if so much of it is wrapped up in Israel?

One of the surprises of the last ten or fifteen years has been the rise of Holocaust studies and the widespread concern with the meaning of the Holocaust. Why it took American Jews twenty years or more to start thinking about the Holocaust is a curious and not easily answered question. Perhaps what aroused them was the sudden peril to Israel in 1967, and again in 1973. Perhaps it was the coming of age of the children of Holocaust survivors, or the influence of Elie Wiesel. Whatever the explanation, the Holocaust certainly has come to occupy a central position in American Jewish consciousness. Can it, however, provide an agenda for Jewish life? This seems doubtful.

Steven M. Cohen and Goldscheider and Zuckerman point to new forms of Jewishness in the United States. The abandonment of many traditional religious practices has gone hand in hand with a surprisingly easy acceptance of Jewish identity among young Jews. Jewishness is no longer something embarrassing or demeaning, something to be hidden by denial, by taking a non-Jewish name, or by an aggressive aping of non-Jewish behavior. All this is true. But "identity" is a peculiar term, pointing simultaneously to the essential center of a person and to the question of whether he has an essential center. More Jews do attest easily to their Jewish identity today. But what does this mean?

The framework of American society does not require a simple, undifferentiated American identity. Every American, it seems, is expected to be more: a Jew or a Christian, an Italian or a Pole, a Texan or a New Yorker, and so on. In that respect, to be a Jew,

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particularly when the pejorative associations of the term have declined, is an easy thing. The fact that today's young Jews are less embarrassed about their Jewish identity does not mean, however, that that identity is a very weighty one, or exercises great influence over their behavior. It is likely to exercise even less over the behavior of their children.

I myself believe that even if by some measures —Jewish day schools, programs of Jewish studies, Hanukkah candles—the level of identity and cohesion seems high, the main tendency is in the other direction. I think in the end Park was right, even if overhasty in his projection of how long the process of assimilation and acculturation would take. My generation looks quite different from that of my parents, as the generation of my children looks quite different from mine, and the generation of their children will be different still. How different? More of them will be the products of intermarriage, and therefore their ethnic and religious identity will be less a given and more a matter of choice. In that respect, they will more closely resemble other Americans, who can pick and choose among identities.

We have been told that Judaism in America is in a line of historic continuity and represents no decisive break with the past, that it is different but still the same. In my judgment this argument is too optimistic. Less and less of the life of American Jews is derived from Jewish history, experience, culture, and religion. More and more of it is derived from the current and existing realities of American culture, American politics, and the general American religion. What this means for the future is that Jews will survive, yes, and perhaps even continue to identify themselves as Jews, but that little by way of custom, belief, or loyalty will be assumed as a result of their identity as Jews.

That, at any rate, is how I would interpret the current evidence concerning Jews and Judaism in the United States. The sociologists who have persistently feared for the American Jewish future may thus have feared for the wrong reasons; but I believe they have been right to be fearful.

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The Newest Political Pilgrims

Paul Hollander

MARXIST-LENINIST Nicaragua has in the last few years emerged as the new destination of political tourists from the United States who have revived a grotesque and embarrassing tradition in Western intellectual-political history: the reverential pilgrimage to highly repressive Communist countries by educated people, beneficiaries of considerable political freedom and material well-being.

By 1979 this tradition had temporarily fallen into discredit. Following the death of Mao in 1976, his successors' revelations about Chinese society largely demolished the worshipful accounts the pilgrims to China had brought back earlier. Mao himself ceased to be deified and (even before the official Chinese rejection in late 1984 of Marxism as an infallible guide to the future) the new Chinese regime began moving toward more free enterprise and better relations with the United States.

By the early 1980's a number of developments had also reduced the glamor and reputation of another Communist country, Cuba. On the one hand, Dr. Benjamin Spock still believed that ". . . the Castro government . . . has made remarkable, admirable progress in education, in housing, in . . . health care—for all citizens," and for a publication of the United Methodist Church, Cuba, as of 1981, still represented "a vision of the future." On the other hand, the appeal of Cuba to its American admirers was sharply reduced by the outpouring in 1980 of 125,000 refugees (most of them poor, and young, and dark-skinned), the persecution of homosexuals, the growing militarization of the society, the stationing of tens of thousands of troops abroad, and the increasingly intimate relationship between Castro and the Soviet Union (which had lost its own attraction decades earlier when even its most ardent supporters were jolted out of their faith by the celebrated revelations of Khrushchev about the reign of Stalin).

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As for Communist Vietnam, it was one thing to celebrate it when American bombs were raining down and its heroic guerrillas were defying American military might, but it was something else again to sing its praises after over a million people had escaped under extremely hazardous conditions from the southern portion of the newly united country.

In these circumstances the rise of Marxist-Leninist Nicaragua could not have been better timed. Here was a small country which had earlier been dominated by the United States, run by a corrupt pro-American dictator, and redeemed by an authentic revolution, the culmination of years of guerrilla war. The new regime came complete with a youthful leadership, most of them former guerrilla fighters, some of them intellectuals of sorts (among the top leaders, Daniel Ortega, Ernesto Cardenal, and Sergio Ramírez had poetic-literary leanings or credentials), and others among them devotees of liberation theology. There was also something for the feminists in the person of Nora Astorga, the Deputy Foreign Minister celebrated for helping to trap and kill a general of Somoza ("Oh God," said an American woman described by the Washington *Post* as a political activist, "to try to get the guy to bed and then kill him! Fantastic. It's like a Western. That's my dream, to do that to Reagan, George Bush, go right down the line!").

For many American sympathizers, events in Nicaragua represented a replay of the 1960's—there was, at any rate, an appealing resemblance: "Here," said *Playboy*, "was a place seemingly run by the kind of people who were 60's radicals. Wherever we went, people were young, singing political folk songs and chanting, 'Power to the People.' One night there was even a Pete Seeger concert in town!" Elsewhere the leaders of the regime were described as "Rock 'n' Roll Rebels . . . into baseball, beer, and Bruce Springsteen."

No wonder, then, that the roster of prominent supporters of the Sandinista regime included so many well-known veterans of the radical movement of the 1960's: William Sloane Coffin, Ron Dellums, Ramsey Clark, Linus Pauling, George Wald, Benjamin Spock, Allen Ginsberg, and Abbie Hoffman. The National Sponsors of USOCA

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(U.S. Out of Central America), a major pro-Sandinista lobby, included Eqbal Ahmad (of the Institute for Policy Studies), Noam Chomsky, Harvey Cox, David Dellinger, Douglas Dowd, Richard Falk, John Gerassi, John C. Leggett, Robert McAfee Brown, Bertell Ollman, Ruth Sidel (author of a glowing report on welfare in China under Mao), Pete Seeger, Leonard Weinglass, Adrienne Rich, Jessica Mitford, the Berrigan brothers, and many other Vietnam-era radicals.

People of this political stripe were, somewhat paradoxically, reinvigorated by the 1980 victory of Ronald Reagan ("the best organizer we have," as one of them said during a demonstration against the administration's policies in El Salvador). Reagan was the exponent of everything the Left detested: faith in capitalism, simple patriotism, an expressed willingness to use force in the defense of American interests abroad, and an unapologetic anti-Communism. Far from killing off the Left, then, the election of Reagan stimulated a resurgence of its political energies, especially in the universities, the churches, and the media.

KNOWING that it had this substantial reservoir of sympathizers on which to draw, and making good use of the lessons of Vietnam—the main one being that public opinion in the United States has great influence on foreign policy—the Sandinista regime began organizing and encouraging tours to Nicaragua almost immediately after the triumph of the revolution in 1979: "Now that the rebels are victorious," wrote a New York *Times* correspondent, "there is a new rush of assorted politicians, journalists, academics, and 'revolutionary groupies' eager to witness . . . the first popular revolution on the continent in twenty years."

Throughout the early 1980's the tours gathered force. As another *Times* correspondent wrote in 1982: "So many Americans and Western Europeans have descended on Nicaragua to study and work with the Sandinista government that a word, *'internacionalistas,'* has been coined to refer to them." A year later, in 1983, the *Times* reported that "Over the past year the Managua government has been a near-permanent host to American fact-finding missions, ranging from church delegations to doctors, students, and Senators, who are warmly received, briefed, and shown projects."

The scope of the new pilgrimages may be gauged in part from the number of organizations promoting the tours. They include Marazul Inc. (specializing in trips to socialist countries; in January 1985 alone, Marazul sponsored 13 different tours to Nicaragua); National Network in Solidarity with the Nicaraguan People (with branches in 75 American cities); Nicaragua-Honduras Education Project (which "Sponsors trips to Nicaragua, mostly for state and local opinion-makers such as elected officials"); Nuevo Instituto de Centro America (which organizes five-week courses of language study); the *Guardian* (a weekly radical newspaper which has organized tours since 1980); Tropical Tours (the official representative of TurNica, the Nicaraguan national tour agency); TurNica itself; U.S. Out of Central America (a "national group with representatives in more than 100 cities actively opposing U.S. policy . . . in Central America. Work includes lobbying elected officials, tours, and donations of medical supplies, . . . teach-ins, and a traveling slide show"); Witness for Peace (supported by the Quaker American Friends Service Committee, with 100 chapters nationwide).

Careful preparations have preceded the tours. According to a story in the *Christian Science Monitor:*

> . . . At a conference in Mexico City, Rosario Murillo, the wife of Nicaraguan junta leader Daniel Ortega Saavedra, asked a well-connected American, Blase Bonpane, to organize delegations of prominent American celebrities to Nicaragua. . . .
>
> Mr. Bonpane, a former Maryknoll priest and professor of Latin American history at the University of California at Los Angeles, is a liberation theologian sympathetic to the Sandinistas. He understood . . . the impact Hollywood stars could have on American public opinion.
>
> By now American liberals have created a virtual industry of delegations to Nicaragua. . . . More than 2,500 Americans have taken part in such missions. . . .
>
> Delegations of church activists, college professors, architects and planners, artists and photographers, nurses and health-care workers, journalists and media-professionals, Vietnam veterans and average citizens . . . have headed south. . . .
>
> Many of the most visible critics of U.S. policy come from Hollywood—celebrities like Ed Asner, Mike Douglas, and Susan Anspach.
>
> Much of the Hollywood interest in Nicaragua can be traced back to Blase Bonpane who helped organize a nine-city tour . . . with singer Jackson Browne, actors Mike Farrell and Diane Ladd, former Georgia State Sen. Julian Bond, and others. The tour was aimed at rallying opposition to U.S. intervention in Nicaragua.

THE extraordinary political importance attached to the tours has also been indicated by the readiness of the Sandinista leaders to make themselves available to the visitors. In the words of a Miami *Herald* account:

> Almost any visiting American official, no matter how low his rank, can now expect to meet with at least two of the nine *comandantes*. . . . Non-official American visitors . . . can count on at least one *comandante* and a well-worn tour of revolutionary highlights.
>
> There are visits to the neighborhood Sandi-

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nista Defense Committees, tours of schools and clinics, and trips to the northern town of Jalapa to witness the damages wreaked by CIA-backed anti-Sandinista guerrillas. . . .

"When they return to the United States they have a multiplier effect on the public opinion of your country," [Interior Minister Tomás] Borge said.

The experience of Texas Civil Liberties Union Legal Director, James C. Harrington, was typical:

> We met with Sergio Ramírez (a novelist and member of the three-member junta . . .), two department directors, with Deputy Foreign Minister Nora Astorga (a charming heroine of the revolution), . . . with the Minister of Culture (Father Ernesto Cardenal), and with two of the three Electoral Commission members. . . .
>
> We broke mid-day bread with three Supreme Court members. . . .

Claudia Dreifus, who interviewed members of the Sandinista Directorate for *Playboy*, also found them most accessible:

> After the interviews were under way, some of the Nicaraguan leaders began inviting Marcelo [the photographer] and me, well, to hang out with them. Things we did in Managua: go with Borge to a prison farm for Miskito Indian counterrevolutionaries; watch Father Cardenal put on an all-day Latin American song festival in Revolutionary Square . . . dinner at Ramírez house.

The Nicaraguan public-relations campaign has been appropriately described by the Miami *Herald* as ". . . a low-key but relentless sales job, subtle but effective, high in moral tone but aimed right at the guts of the Americans' conscience." For as Minister Borge has said: "Nicaragua's most important war is the one fought inside the United States. . . . The battlefield will be the American conscience. . . ."

Accordingly, the regime has tailored its message to different audiences. As John Vinocur of the New York *Times* has noted:

> To American visitors, frequently from church and university groups, the revolution is described as a humanist one, a struggle against misery. To other visitors, with left-wing views, the talk is of "scientific change" with no interest in achieving "perfect democracy," but a revolution aimed at a "total social transformation."

Not all visitors have been mere sightseers. The Washington law firm, Reichler and Appelbaum, which is the Nicaraguan government's official registered agent in the United States (and is reportedly paid about $320,000 per year for its services) has sent hired investigators who have been provided "in-country transportation, boarding, housing, office space [and] staff," to help collect information on atrocities committed by the *contras*.

Other visitors, like their predecessors in Cuba who cut sugar cane (the Venceremos Brigade), have volunteered to work on various projects such as picking coffee beans. However, the "central thrust is what each volunteer does when he or she returns to the United States." In other words, to quote Diane Passmore, national coordinator of the National Network in Solidarity with the Nicaraguan People, "The major goal is to have them return and tell others about the country and their experiences."

And so they have. For example, following a ten-day visit, Republican State Senator Jeanette Hamby from Oregon and her fellow women tourists returned with "the fervor of new converts." Reported Colman McCarthy in the Washington *Post:*

> In Oregon, Hamby and her friends have been speaking regularly before political, civic, and church groups. They are seeking to persuade people . . . that our policies there [in Nicaragua] are politically wrong and morally corrupt.

So too, Michael Harrington, the well-known author and chairman of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, came back from Nicaragua feeling, as he wrote,

> more ashamed of my country than at any time since the Vietnam war. The Nicaraguans are a generous people, a poor and often hungry people, who want to make a truly democratic revolution and it is we who work to subvert their decency.

Similar feelings both about the Nicaraguan revolution and American policy were expressed by other prominent American writers. William Styron joined a group of fellow novelists from Europe and Latin America in protesting American threats to the "modest but profound achievements of the Nicaraguan revolution." The poet Adrienne Rich described Sandinista Nicaragua as "a society that took poets seriously" and approvingly quoted someone who told her: "You'll love Nicaragua. Everyone there is a poet."

This remark recalled the news brought back from North Vietnam by Tom Hayden and Staughton Lynd in 1966:

> We knew . . . what the Vietnamese contribution to a humane socialism would be: it was evident in the unembarrassed handclasps among men, the poetry and song at the center of man-woman relationships, the freedom to weep practiced by everyone. . . . Here we began to understand the possibilities for a socialism of the heart.

Other echoes of past pilgrimages to Communist regimes could be heard in comments about Nicaraguan prisons:

> The prison we visited was the first of seven prison farms. Former national guardsmen will-

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ing to cooperate are moved through a series of more and more relaxed prison settings. The prison we saw had 38 inmates, no armed guards, conjugal visits. . . . The man speaking had high praise for the government and said if freed he would go to fight for the FSLN [the Sandinistas] in the north. Money made from the crops is put back into improvements for the prison. . . . As part of the routine the men attend classes in literacy and agriculture. Many who previously had no skill but shooting a gun now have plans to become farmers.

This, from a group of American churchmen. And indeed, of all the pilgrims to the Marxist-Leninist regime in Nicaragua, it is church groups who have become its most active and dedicated supporters (perhaps because, as former President Jimmy Carter put it in announcing his endorsement of a project "to build homes for landless peasants" in Nicaragua, "We want the folks down there to know that some American Christians love them").

Thus: Maryknoll nuns have returned from Nicaragua to lobby in Washington and have exerted considerable influence on House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill. The Reverend William Sloane Coffin (who had earlier affirmed the decency of the North Vietnamese Communist regime) now assured readers of the New York *Times* that the Nicaraguan regime could not possibly be Marxist-Leninist since it included Roman Catholic priests (all of whom, incidentally, were on record asserting the compatibility of Marxism and Christianity). In any case, Coffin was satisfied that the goals of the Sandinistas were "to stop the exploitation of the many by the few and to end foreign domination." A reporter for the *Catholic Worker* sensed "an atmosphere of youth, vitality, and hope throughout Nicaragua." Father Richard Preston of Lansing, Michigan, reached the conclusion that "the reign of God has arrived in Nicaragua" as well as "the reign of truth, hope and justice." A member of the Quaker Witness for Peace group disclosed that he had "never been in a society so permeated by religion" as Sandinista Nicaragua, and David Sweet, a founder of Witness for Peace, emphasized "the Christian nature of the Nicaraguan revolution" and insisted that "the revolution is drawing its strength from Christians. . . ."*

On this point too the echoes of past pilgrimages are loud. For example, D. F. Buxton, an English Quaker, wrote of the Soviet Union in 1928: "In the emphasis they place on the spirit of service, the Communists have taken to heart some of the most important maxims of the New Testament . . . their society is a more Christian one than ours." An American Quaker, Henry Hodgkin, proposed in 1932: "As we look at Russia's great experiment in brotherhood, it may seem to us that some dim perception of Jesus's way, all unbeknown, is inspiring it. . . ." Hewlett Johnson, the Dean of Canterbury, regarded Stalin's Russia as "singularly Christian and civilized. . . ." And to a group of Christian theologians, Mao's China "has come to exert some particular impact on our understanding and experience of God's saving love."

It is not being suggested here that Nicaragua today is nearly as repressive or violent a country as the Soviet Union under Stalin or China under Mao. But on the other hand, as Octavio Paz, the eminent Mexican writer, puts it, "the process of Sovietization is quite advanced" in Nicaragua today. Thus even when allowances are made for the overpowering effects of favorable predisposition and the inherent limitations of learning about a country through a short conducted tour, the credulousness of the pilgrims to Nicaragua remains staggering. Not only do they ignore the lessons of similar pilgrimages and tours in the past; they also blind themselves to the abundant information and testimony available about Nicaragua, much of it coming from Nicaraguans untainted by any association with the Somoza regime and who were in fact supporters of the revolution which deposed him, that belies the image projected by the Sandinistas and carefully cultivated through the tours.

Edén Pastora is one such prominent leader who first fought against Somoza and is now fighting the Sandinistas. He writes:

> Sadly, the revolution's bright promise has not been realized. The Sandinista directorate has replaced the Somozas with a totalitarian tyranny. . . .
>
> The government has emasculated the country's independent labor unions. . . . Freedom of the press has been practically extinguished. . . . The directorate has set up a powerful secret-police apparatus. . . . [The regime] remains silent in the face of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and acts as an apologist for the . . . crackdown in Poland.
>
> . . . Despite . . . loans and outright grants totalling over $1.5 billion, the economy is in shambles. . . . Living conditions are deteriorating. The real wages of Nicaragua's working class have plummeted 60 percent during last year. . . .

Domingo Sanchez Delgado, "a dedicated Marxist-Leninist" and nominee of the Socialist party for President, says:

> We are not Sandinistas. . . . We don't want a country where the press is not free . . . where power is abused . . . where young people can't

* The German novelist Guenter Grass agreed. After visiting a Sandinista prison in the company of Minister of the Interior Tomás Borge, Grass decided that "in this tiny, sparsely populated land, . . . Christ's words are taken literally. . . ."

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go to the movies because they are afraid they will be captured for military service.

. . . There is arrogance and abuse of every sort. This is hardly revolutionary conduct. . . .

Virgilio Godoy Reyes was Minister of Labor in the Sandinista government from 1979 until 1984. He has reached the conclusion that

these five years have shown the great error we made in giving our confidence to those who think of nothing but the interests of their party. . . . After so many dreams, disillusion. Instead of liberty, new forms of oppression. To say that the workers and peasants are in power is a monstrous lie. . . . The only equality we are achieving is equality in misery.

Arturo Cruz, former Sandinista ambassador to the U.S. and the most prominent democratic critic of the regime, writes:

The Sandinistas are evidently determined to ignore the democratic yearnings of the Nicaraguan people. . . . The problem of Nicaragua is not MIG's and assault helicopters. It is, fundamentally, the absence of liberty—the character of the government that will put such weapons to use.

There has also been criticism from some former American admirers of the regime. Robert S. Leiken of the Carnegie Endowment is one of them:

For one who has sympathized with the Sandinistas, it is painful to look into the house they are building. . . . Each succeeding trip to Nicaragua drains my initial reservoir of sympathy for the Sandinistas. . . .

One of the most depressing aspects of our trip was to hear from so many that their lives are worse today than they were at the time of Somoza.

. . . A Sandinista *nomenklatura* has emerged. Party members shop at hard-currency stores, dine at luxury restaurants restricted to party officials, and vacation in the mansions of the Somoza dynasty, labeled "protocol houses" [as in Cuba]. . . . Vans pull up daily at government and party offices to deliver . . . delicacies unavailable elsewhere.

. . . Ration cards are confiscated for non-attendance at Sandinista meetings.

. . . Draft resistance has become a mass movement in Nicaragua.

Senator Edward Kennedy, generally speaking not a harsh critic of the Sandinistas, has had this to say about their policy toward the Miskito Indians:

. . . The Sandinistas' treatment of the Indians continues to be unconscionable. One-third to one-half of the 90,000 Indians on the coast have been displaced. Some 20,000 fled to Honduras to escape the Sandinistas' scorched-earth policy . . . 10,000 are confined to resettlement camps. . . . Most disturbing of all, 3,000 to 5,000 have lived for two years in forced-labor camps which resemble concentrations camps. . . .

The treatment of the Indians is not the only manifestation of the repressive policies pursued by the regime. Contrary to the claims of American sympathizers, the Sandinistas (according to the Nicaraguan Commission of Jurists) carried out over 8,000 political executions between July 19, 1979 and December 12, 1982. This and many other examples of political violence and human-rights violations have been extensively documented in what probably is the single best compilation of the true record of the Nicaraguan regime. Its author, Humberto Belli, used to be a supporter of the Sandinistas and editorial-page editor of *La Prensa*.

IN THE light of such information, and against the background of past precedents, the current political pilgrimages to Nicaragua emerge as a remarkable example of the confluence of deception and self-deception. This, indeed, is in part the message that Michael Massing intended to convey in an article in the *Nation* ("Hard Questions on Nicaragua," April 6, 1985), a rather mild demurral from the Left's blind enthusiasm for the Sandinista regime for which, predictably, he was then heavily pilloried in that magazine's letters section. As that exchange once again underscores, today's new pilgrims demonstrate the same tenacity of belief, the willful inability to learn from history, and above all the hostility toward our own society that have repeatedly predisposed certain groups and individuals to admire and idealize political systems opposed to ours, especially when they are run by revolutionaries acting in the name of Marx. The only question is—and it may not be premature to raise it, since as we have seen there are already signs of disillusionment with the Sandinistas—who will be next?

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Scripture and Culture

Robert Alter

A GREAT deal has changed in this country since that distant era of origins when the Pilgrim founders habitually thought of America as the New Israel. But even at this late date in the process of secularization, many of the ambiguities of our cultural predicament are still linked to the long aftermath of a culture centered on the Bible.

In order to do any justice to this historical phenomenon, we have to shuttle back and forth between two different, if overlapping, meanings of the term "culture"—the prestige sense of the word, which involves serious literature, music, art, philosophy; and the anthropological sense, which addresses itself to the characteristic patterns of behavior of ordinary people in quotidian and ritual situations. With regard to the persisting cultural presence of the Bible, there is often a causal connection between culture in the anthropological and culture in the prestige sense: the novels of Melville are a repeated argument with and recasting of the Bible, but that could scarcely have come about had not Bible reading and Bible quoting been so pervasive in the American home of the earlier 19th century.

It is sometimes claimed that the historical criticism of the Bible, an enterprise that can be taken back as far as Spinoza but that first reached full momentum in 19th-century Germany, is responsible for the erosion of the authority of the Bible. The facts of the matter seem to me more complicated than that. Many of the major figures in biblical criticism have been believers and even clerics, and their project has been not to deny the truth of the Bible, but to change the terms in which that truth is conceived. This general point has been argued cogently by Hans W. Frei in his seminal study, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* (1974):

> In effect, the realistic or history-like quality of biblical narratives, acknowledged by all, instead of being examined for the bearing it had in its own right on meaning and interpretation, was immediately transposed into the quite different issue of whether or not the realistic narrative was historical.

Before the dawn of modernity, the biblical text, in both Christian and Jewish traditions, was variously but vigorously construed as revealed truth—divinely underwritten in every detail, every particle and letter. When the emergence of a new historical perspective in the understanding of the past made this view of the Bible increasingly difficult to maintain, there came about what Frei calls a "simple transposition and logical confusion between two categories or contexts of meaning and interpretation"—that is, between what is history-like and what is actually historical in the Bible. As part of the project, moreover, of penetrating to the historical kernel, scholars adopted the new tools of philology to question the integrity of the sundry biblical texts. Where for the imagination of the believer there had been one Bible, majestically unfolding step by step from "In the beginning God created . . ." onward, there was now a welter of *E-*, *J-*, *P-*, and *D-* documents, scribal glosses, editorial bridges, redactional revisions, shards and fragments pasted together from a hundred conjectured ancient sources.

It may seem self-evident that this whole enterprise should undercut the possibility of belief in Scripture as the word of the living God, and in fact the 19th century in particular offers numerous instances of intellectuals who suffered an irreversible loss of faith through the corrosive effect of biblical criticism. It should be stressed, however, that biblical criticism, however skeptical, however revisionist, however atomistic in its approach to the text, has also represented an effort to get at the truth behind the text. In many respects this resembles any modern scholarly investigation of a corpus of ancient documents—but not, I would argue, in one respect. It is as though the biblical scholar were saying: in all good intellectual conscience, I must concede that these words, in the order and form that have been passed down to us, are not literally the words of the eternal God, but if only I could analyze them finely enough, match them with enough archeological evidence and extra-biblical documents, perhaps I could begin to glimpse the originating truth, the hidden historical core of those epoch-making doctrines and

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values that have determined the lives of so many millions these past two thousand years. In this regard, modern biblical scholarship is the particularly urgent turn given by revealed religion to the quest for origins initiated by European romanticism.

Let me offer a contemporary American instance of how this attitude percolates down from the high culture of esoteric scholarship to more popular strata. A few years ago, an enterprising editor named Hershel Shanks created a glossy, stylish, illustrated bimonthly magazine called *Biblical Archeology Review*. The magazine runs brief, informative articles, accompanied with sumptuous color photographs, by reputable archeologists and biblical scholars on particular excavations, on newly discovered inscriptions or documents, on ancient Near Eastern cultic practices, and so forth. The *Biblical Archeology Review* claims close to 115,000 subscribers, a figure I find astounding. To judge by the letters to the editor and by the advertisements, many if not most of this group are believing Christians—though not, it is safe to assume, unswerving fundamentalists.

There is clearly something in all this beyond a mere fad of archeology. If I try to imagine what tens of thousands of believing Christians (and Jews as well) are up to reading a magazine like *Biblical Archeology Review*, I am led to conclude that they are impelled by a motive similar to that of classical biblical scholarship: to know, for example, exactly how Jesus's cross was really constructed, what was the design of King Hezekiah's fortifications, what precisely were the scope and function of the practice of child sacrifice against which the Bible inveighed—in general, how did all these things *look* (hence the importance of the photographs); and through all this material knowledge, to get back to the core of historical truth from which the Bible issued. What is involved here, as I have suggested, is more than a fascination with the archaic: one does not find magazines on pre-Columbian or Greco-Roman archeology with this many subscribers, and it is hard to imagine how the investigation of other regions could have the peculiar spiritual urgency that these inquiries into biblical antiquity have for Jewish and Christian readers.

I have dwelled on this example because it strongly suggests that the historical criticism of the Bible, though it is often thought of as a secularization of Scripture, might better be described as an attempt to recover the religious truth of the Bible through means of investigation compatible with secular categories. Since this is hardly an activity for fundamentalists, it is by no means a question of trying to "prove" the validity of the Bible through secular means, but rather of adducing visual evidence for the concrete realities of biblical experience, even when they are camouflaged, distorted, or at best barely glimpsed in the verbal formulations of the received text. What I would contend is not that biblical criticism has been bent on unseating the Bible from its authoritative role but rather that its effort to get at the truth of the Bible has been directed by what A.N. Whitehead, in a different but related context of intellectual history, called "misplaced concreteness." It is, I would grant, intriguing to see in an Assyrian bas-relief the exact design of the siege weapons used against the Judean city of Lachish, and perhaps this may clarify an obscure phrase in Isaiah or a biblical account of a military campaign. But bridging the gap between our material world and that of ancient Israel does not close the existential distance between modern people and ancient text, does not provide access to the complex spiritual truths of the texts.

Since we live in the aftermath of a biblically centered culture, attitudes toward the Bible are often still an index of more general ideological positions. But before I try to sketch out any of these correlations, I would observe that when we move from culture in the prestige sense to popular culture, the decentering of the Bible may have much less to do with conscious attitude than with a simple erosion of connection. In the broad movement of secularization, which biblical criticism intersects at a somewhat oblique angle, people in large numbers long ago stopped reading the Bible; for millions, the peripherality of the Bible is not a matter of skepticism but of ignorance. Any teacher of literature will be familiar with the problem Northrop Frye touches on in the preface to his recent book, *The Great Code*—that many manifestations of the Western literary tradition, because they are formulated in terms of biblical imagery, biblical plots, specific verses from the Bible, have become unintelligible to contemporary readers.

My impression is that the Bible has fared worse in this regard than the Greek and Latin classics that constitute the other matrix of Western literature. It is true that very few secondary-school students actually learn Greek any more, but most of those who go on to college have read the *Odyssey* in translation, or at any rate encounter it in the first couple of years at college; as a result, they are likely to have some context for the allusions to Homer in Joyce's *Ulysses*, but none at all for the allusions to the Elijah story in the same novel, the Book of Kings by this time having become the kind of text most people have heard of but never glanced at. It may be that this endemic illiteracy in relation to the Bible is by now beyond remedy, though perhaps the catastrophe might at least be mitigated by trying to learn in an academic setting how to read the Bible as a body of compelling literary texts instead of merely *investigating* Scripture. This is a point to which I will return.

Given the twin erosion of plain knowledge of the Bible and of belief in the Bible as divinely revealed truth, the notion that the Bible has real

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prescriptive authority in governing our moral and political lives would seem to be restricted to fundamentalist groups. There are, of course, substantial numbers of non-fundamentalist Christians and Jews who try to take the Bible seriously, but in most instances they would ultimately fail the test of according prescriptive authority to Scripture. One readily sees this whenever there is an unambiguous conflict between contemporary mores, especially those deemed progressive, and explicitly stated biblical values. Thus, the biblical view of homosexuality leaves little latitude for interpretation: it is an abomination to the Lord, a practice associated with the hateful corruption, both sexual and cultic, of the surrounding pagan world from which Israel must distance itself. Christian fundamentalists have been vocal in responding to the prescriptive force of biblical statements on this issue; in more "advanced" Christian and Jewish circles, however, where homosexual clergymen and congregations have gained acceptance, it is clear that the real prescriptive force comes from contemporary attitude rather than from Scripture.

If the Bible, then, has ceased to be literally authoritative for the majority of Americans, it nevertheless remains associated with the idea of authority. America has never been an authoritarian society, but it has by and large respected the idea of authority. Its leaders, for better or for worse, have often been reassuring father figures; it has honored written traditions, religious and secular, as well as traditional institutions; even in its most extravagant expressions of individualism, it has assumed that there is a fundamental difference between freedom and anarchy. The turmoil of the late 60's created an alternative to this set of assumptions by introducing into American political consciousness, without the support of an articulated ideology of anarchism, the idea that authority as such was the real enemy. The one political bumper-sticker that (in California, at least) has survived twenty years of ideological changes is the two-word injunction: QUESTION AUTHORITY.

In our culture, whether we call it Judeo-Christian or post-Judeo-Christian, the first textual association with the idea of authority is the Bible. You can bet that the man or woman at the wheel of the car whose bumper enjoins us to question all authority will be among the first to consign Deuteronomy and Matthew to the dust heap of discarded instruments of oppression. The new fundamentalisms can be seen as an equal and opposite response to this impulse of rejection, the allure of authority turning into a flirtation with authoritarianism and the idea of authoritative Scripture transformed into a literalist attribution of absolute authority to every jot and tittle of the biblical text.

SOME of the current controversies in literary studies in this country vividly illustrate how certain lines of relation to the Bible readily extend into other areas and help determine underlying political attitudes. Of late, a great deal has been said, by feminists, Marxists, deconstructionists in particular, about the "canon" of literary works and how it is inevitably determined by suspect ideological considerations. Canon, of course, is a concept drawn from the history of the institutional reception of the Bible, and it can be applied to a large and highly heterogeneous body of poetic, fictional, and dramatic texts only by way of loose analogy. Its current use, then, involves a degree of polemical distortion, suggesting that there is in literary tradition a kind of hidden equivalent of the formal councils of ecclesiastical authorities who decide on principles of inclusion and exclusion, and that the status of the non-canonical literary text is fixed and absolute, like an apocryphal work excluded by the rabbis or church fathers and deemed forever outside the scriptural pale.

American literary scholars touched by the doctrines of deconstruction have been particularly vocal in raising suspicions about existing canons and arguing for the unsettling of canons. With their notion that all hierarchical oppositions in texts are reversible, that the peripheral can become central, outside can become inside (or, as one would say more biblically, that the last will be first), the supplanting of the literary canon has been very much a political slogan. One of the most prominent advocates of this program of deconstruction in the last few years has been Jonathan Culler. Politically, Culler is a product of the SDS of the 60's, who has settled in comfortably as a successful member of the academy at an Ivy League institution, carrying the banner of deconstruction as his own equivalent of the QUESTION AUTHORITY bumper-sticker, and of late channeling the revolutionary impulse of his early years into a particularly strident version of feminism.

It is instructive, then, that Culler, whose own work is limited to the 19th and 20th centuries and, except for an early book on Flaubert, deals with theoretical rather than with literary works, should have expressed outrage over the fact that the September 1984 meeting of the English Institute chose to devote a whole set of papers to the literature of the Hebrew Bible. One might have thought that such a programming decision would have been a matter of indifference to a scholar of Culler's interests, but instead he construed it as a kind of betrayal of the trust of literary studies. The sense of betrayal for Culler was no doubt sharpened by the fact that the organizer of the English Institute session on the Bible was none other than Geoffrey Hartman, the senior figure in the small group of prominent scholars at Yale who have been responsible for putting deconstruction on the American academic map.

Now, Culler formulated his objections as a kind of intellectual church-state issue, arguing that the enterprise of literary studies was fundamentally

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secular, committed to the critical spirit of secularity, and that therefore it had no business dealing with texts and topics that were the domain of benighted creedal interests. This definition of the literary in contradistinction to the scriptural as an opposition between secular and religious will not stand much scrutiny. It hardly needs to be said that many of the major works of the Western literary tradition, even if we refrain from calling it a canon, are profoundly religious in character, from Dante to Milton to Dostoevsky to T.S. Eliot, and many writers, like John Donne and W.H. Auden, have produced both secular and religious texts linked by complex affinities. To suggest that the religious dimension of such works is not the concern of literary scholars makes no more sense than proposing that the psychological dimension of literary texts should be left solely to the psychologist. I would add that on the scriptural side, there are elements of the biblical texts that are intrinsically secular—witness the Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and much of the Book of Proverbs—however later tradition reinterprets them religiously, and so here, too, the secular-religious opposition collapses.

The real reason, it seems to me, that the introduction of the Bible into the literary precincts of the academy should be anathema to the radical deconstructionist is the specter of authority that the Bible evokes. Here is the very source and fount of the concept of binding canon smuggled into the realm where progressive spirits are fighting the good fight to break down the barriers of canon, displace major with minor, and let in the excluded from below and beyond.

To insist, as I have done, on an association of ideas in our culture between Scripture and authority is to beg the more essential question of whether Scripture still has any authority. One obvious answer would be a kind of tautology: that Scripture has authority for those who continue to believe, whether as fundamentalists or in some revisionist fashion, that it is the revealed word of God. Such belief, for many Americans, may be translated into political motives as diverse as a dedication to pursue justice and mercy in social policy or an opposition to the teaching of evolutionary theory in public schools; in any case, the authority of the biblical text is strong enough to compel action.

This self-evident answer to the question of the authority of Scripture is worth mentioning because it suggests that, however skeptical a secular observer may choose to be, the imperative presence of the Bible remains something serious to conjure with in contemporary American life. Nevertheless, there is a very large group of Americans who are not inclined to attribute a divine source to Scripture; some of these are conscious secularists, others what could be called casual non-religionists, and still others adherents to some post-traditional form of Judaism or Christianity. At first thought, it might appear that for this sizable group the answer to the question about the continuing authority of Scripture should be an unequivocal no. In fact, I think our cultural situation vis-à-vis the Bible is more interestingly ambiguous than would be allowed for by a neat division into believers and non-believers.

Let me try to illustrate this ambiguity by describing the double-edged thrust of an activity in which I have been personally involved over the past ten years, the attempt to fashion a new literary approach to the Bible. When I wrote my first essay on this subject in 1975,* decrying the concentration of a century of biblical scholarship on purely excavative issues and calling for intellectually rigorous literary perspectives, I fancied, rather ignorantly, that I was a voice crying out in the wilderness. As I soon discovered, a whole new generation of biblical scholars in this country was beginning to turn, perhaps a little falteringly, from the search for Ugaritic loan-words and the determination of the historicity of the texts to considerations of literary art. Since the mid-70's there has been a spate of articles and books on the Bible with literary emphases, and in the last few years, predictably, even a few signs of backlash, which, however, by no means impedes the continuing forward rush of the literary trend in biblical studies.

All this is clearly beginning to make a difference in how the Bible is thought about and taught in American seminaries, colleges, and universities, There are intriguing methodological issues involved in this shift, but beyond methodology, what is at stake is a pursuit in the Bible of a different order of truth—to invoke again Hans Frei's terms, it is a turning from the truth of history to the truth of realism, that is, to what may not be a factual account of events but is coherently history-like.

What effect does this adoption of literary perspectives have on the authority of Scripture? In my view, the effect is, necessarily, a paradoxical one. To read the Bible with literary eyes would seem to complete a long process of secularizing Scripture, and hence of undercutting any claim it might have to authority. On another level (or perhaps one should say, for other minds), the literary reading of the Bible provides a means of getting in touch again with the religious power of Scripture, and so reinstates scriptural authority in new terms. The undercutting of authority is obvious enough; the way in which it is reinstated may need more detailed explanation.

Although the category of literature, as I have said, cuts across both religious and secular experience, our cultural operating assumption is that the source of literary works, however profound or in-

* "A Literary Approach to the Bible," Commentary, December 1975.

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tricate they may seem, is human. In Anglo-American culture, certain attempts have been made, beginning with Matthew Arnold, to instate literature as a kind of substitute religion in reaction to a general waning of faith. But these have not fared well, and their ultimate devolution is reflected in the tendency of many literary theorists today to deny the privileged status and the very distinctiveness of literary discourse, leveling the plays of Shakespeare with menus, graffiti, and bureaucratic directives. We need not accede to such polemical simplifications, but the fact remains that when we analyze, say, exalted poetry like Keats's odes, we are quite conscious that it is a particular human mind, working through a complex interplay of linguistic phenomena, semiotic codes, and literary conventions, that is responsible for the beauty of the poems. When these same instruments of analysis are directed toward Psalms or the Song of Songs or the poetry of Isaiah, it would seem inevitable that texts defined by tradition as sacred Scripture will be seen as human productions.

LITERARY appreciation does not automatically contradict belief in the inspired character of the text, but it can manage quite comfortably without reference to such belief. Recently, after a lecture I delivered on biblical narrative, a young man wearing the small knit skullcap and trimmed beard of modern Jewish Orthodoxy asked me whether the complexities of moral motivation in the story I had discussed were not evidence of the divine inspiration that had produced the story. I was obliged to respond that, unfortunately, no literary analysis could confirm faith in this way, and that certain gifted writers, including thorough secularists like Henry James and Joseph Conrad as well as intent monotheists like the authors of Genesis and the David story manifested this ability to imagine moral dilemmas and ambiguities of motivation with an uncanny complexity.

But if it is true that a literary approach to Scripture in no way implies that the biblical text has a uniquely privileged status, my Orthodox questioner was right in one respect. The historical criticism of the Bible is rooted in a view of truth associated with 19th-century positivism that does not sit well with any sense of the moral or spiritual authority of Scripture. In this view, what counts is what really happened once in the coordinates of earthly time and space, what can be uncovered with the archeologist's spade, measured by carbon dating, or at least inferentially determined as the actual material cause behind the elaborate layers of verbal mediation that constitute the biblical text. Literary analysis, on the other hand, brackets the question of history, not necessarily out of indifference to history but because it assumes that factual history is not the primary concern of the text and that it is in any case largely indeterminable, given the scant data we have to work with at a remove of two to three millennia from the originating events to which the text refers.

A literary approach, instead, directs attention to the moral, psychological, political, and spiritual realism of the biblical texts, which is a way of opening ourselves to something that deserves to be called their authority, whether we attribute that authority solely to the power of the human imagination or to a transcendent source of illumination that kindled the imagination of the writers to express itself through these particular literary means. The oft-quoted rabbinical dictum, *dibra torah kilshon benei 'adam,* "the Torah spoke in human language," must be applied not merely to the idioms of Scripture but to the adoption by the biblical writers of an elaborate set of literary instruments for the articulation—perhaps, indeed, for the discovery—of their religious vision. Ethical monotheism was not delivered to the world as a series of abstract principles but in cunningly wrought narratives, poetry, parables, orations, in an intricate patterning of symbolic language and rhetoric that extends even to the genealogical tables and the laws. We will scarcely feel the forceful modulations with which the texts address us unless we somehow attend to the literary forms of the address.

The difference between the project of the new literary criticism of the Bible and that of modern historical criticism may be usefully conceived as a closing of distance between reader and text versus an interposition of distance between reader and text. Although the historical critic may regard the religious character of the text with the utmost seriousness, his method implies an underlying view of the text as an inert object of investigation —the stratified verbal deposits of the life of ancient Israel that need to be carefully gauged, discriminated, classified so that we can build hypotheses about both the evolution of the text and the life behind the text. What is tacitly assumed, though rarely admitted, is a vantage point of cognitive superiority from which the modern investigator overviews the ancient text, and that assumption of superiority entails a sense of existential distance from the text.

By contrast, the literary analyst, though he should certainly be aware of the differences of ancient mind-set and ancient literary procedures, presupposes a deep continuity of human experience that makes the concerns of the ancient text directly accessible to him. These millennia-old expressions of fear, anguish, passion, perplexity, exultation speak to us because they issue from human predicaments quite like our own and are cast in the molds of plot, character, dialogue, scene, imagery, word-play, and sound play that are recognizable analogues to the modalities of literary texts more easily familiar to us, closer to us in time and space.

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LET me try to bring the argument into sharper focus through an illustration of how historical and literary criticism respectively read a biblical text. Genesis 33 reports the reunion of Jacob and Esau after twenty years. Jacob, one recalls, has fled to his uncle Laban in Mesopotamia in fear for his life after having deceived his blind father by stealing the blessing meant for Esau. When he returns, loaded with wives and concubines and sons and cattle, he is still fearful of what Esau might do. On the night before the meeting, he wrestles in the dark with the mysterious stranger who at daybreak confers on him the numinous name of Israel. When the brothers finally meet, Esau rushes up to Jacob and embraces him, and the two at last are reconciled.

What ought to be attended to in such a text? For the late E.A. Speiser, whose commentary on Genesis in the Anchor Bible series is one of the American monuments to the documentary approach to the Pentateuch, there is scarcely any hesitation about emphasis. Given only a page to devote to the episode, he makes a couple of brief and very general remarks about the "affectionate reunion" of the brothers and then proceeds to more serious business:

> The sympathetic portrayal of Esau accords well with the picture that *J* drew of him in ch. xxvii. The present account of the meeting is largely from the same hand, perhaps even entirely. To be sure, vss. 5, 10, and 11 use the term Elohim, hence many critics would assign all or most of 4-11 to *E*. Actually, however, the argument is far from conclusive.

And with this Speiser goes on to consider in detail why the passage is not necessarily a composite but may be plausibly attributed to *J*, with a little appendix from *P* in the last four verses of the chapter.

I am not concerned here with whether Speiser is right or wrong or with the methodological problems in making these discriminations about different sources in the biblical text, but rather with the relation to the text in which this kind of analysis places us. The encounter between Jacob and Esau, which is surely one of the great surprising climaxes of the patriarchal narratives, is dismissed with a perfunctory gesture of appreciation. The force and significance of the imagined scene are assumed to be self-evident, hardly requiring any minute analysis—though in fact what this meeting means to each of the brothers is far from obvious, and the theme of lordship and subservience that has followed the story of the brothers from the womb is reasserted here with fascinating ironic complications. For the documentary critic, however, the real concern is not the imaginative coherence of the narrative invention—Frei's "realism"—but the historical mediation of the text. Thus, in Speiser's commentary it is not Jacob and Esau but *E*, *J*, and *P* that become the subject of investigation. In this way the text is held at a distance for inspection, and any voice that might speak from its imagined situation to our actual one is in effect suppressed.

This is not the place to launch a close reading of the whole complex episode, but I would like to comment briefly on two features of the reunion in order to suggest the kind of questions a literary analysis might raise and what that might have to do with a perception of the authority of the text. From the beginning of the tale of the twins, as I have intimated, what has been explicitly at stake is who will be lord (*'adon*) and who will be servant (*'eved*). The opposition is first set out in the oracle to the pregnant Rebekah: "One nation will be stronger than the other,/and the elder will serve [*ya'avod*] the younger" (Genesis 25:23). The reversal of primogeniture announced in the oracle is certainly unambiguous, and this reversal would seem to be irrevocably confirmed first in the selling of the birthright to Jacob and then, still more clearly, when Jacob steals their father's blessing and Isaac must tell the outraged Esau, "Look, I have made him master over you, and all his brothers I have given him as servants . . ." (Genesis 27:37).

What is curious about the reunion of the brothers in Genesis 33, which is, by the way, also the last reported meeting between them in the biblical record, is that it has a look of disconfirming what has been so abundantly confirmed. Esau repeatedly addresses Jacob directly in a fraternal second-person singular, but only once, in the middle of the dialogue (verses 10-11), does Jacob use the second-person form—and this immediately after Esau has called him "my brother." Otherwise, Jacob, after having approached Esau by prostrating himself seven times, maintains the deferential third-person form of address, again and again referring to himself as "your servant" (*'avdekha*) and to Esau as "my lord" (*'adoni*), "my lord" being the very last word he says to Esau when they part.

The irony of this reversal of a reversal, this transposition of the terms of Isaac's blessing, is a rich one because there is no simple way to resolve it. Jacob's great show of subservience is of course a matter of prudence, as he is afraid of what Esau may do to him. Is there a moral or even political theme here, suggesting that in the ambiguous play of events true lordship is sometimes achieved by ignoring the outward trappings of superiority, perhaps by a willingness to suffer self-abasement? Or is Jacob's case for lordship somehow undercut by this behavior vis-à-vis the generous and lordly Esau? Might this final encounter between the brothers, where Jacob is servant and Esau is lord, intimate that in the uncertain medium of history there could be an element of permanent instability, unpredictability, in the seemingly clear-cut terms of the oracle and the blessing?

The irony of the scene is brought to a sharp

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point by Jacob's use of a single brief phrase that echoes an exchange at which he was not present, the dialogue between Isaac and the frustrated Esau in Genesis 27. For when Jacob here finally brings himself to address his brother in the second person, he says, "Please *take my blessing* that has been brought for you" (verse 11). Now, the term for blessing, *berakhah,* also means gift, and that is obviously the sense in which Jacob is using it here. The writer chooses this particular term (there are at least three other common biblical words that mean gift) because through it Jacob is made to reverse what Isaac said twenty years earlier to Esau, "Your brother came in deceit and he *took your blessing*" (Genesis 32:35) and what Esau bitterly confirmed, "And look, now he has *taken my blessing*" (Genesis 37:36).

As with the surrounding irony of the terms lord and servant, this irony leaves us poised between competing possibilities of interpretation. Are we to perceive an act of symmetrical restitution when Jacob asks Esau to take his *berakhah* just as he has taken Esau's *berakhah?* Or is this meager compensation on Jacob's part a mere material gift *(berakhah)* offered in exchange for a stolen blessing *(berakhah)* whose benefits are permanent and untransferable? Does the pun make Jacob the unwitting target of authorial irony, perhaps suggesting that he has achieved his victory by dubious means, or is he himself aware that his choice of words reflects a reversal of his own earlier act as he now seeks to right the old wrong?

THE terms of analysis I have proposed do not differ essentially from those that would be used to define the complex mimetic art of a scene from *The Red and the Black, Anna Karenina,* or *Ulysses.* The difference is not a matter of method but of context. The biblical text, that is, carries after it a wake of canonicity, not only for the believer but for the half-believer and the non-believer as well. One recent critic of the new wave of literary interest in the Bible has protested that, after all, Jacob and Joseph are not fictional characters but are rather our forefathers, the founding figures of God's covenanted people. The real point, I think, is that they are both at once, and that double identity is the source of their special authority, even for the reader who is not prepared to refer them to the category of revelation.

Jacob is not merely a fictional construct, an imaginative hypothesis with the suasive force of verisimilitude. He is abundantly that, but he is also the eponymous founder of Israel, which both as physical entity and theological concept has had and continues to have enormous consequences in countless lives. The fine complexity, then, with which he is rendered in this initiating text addresses itself to our political, moral, and religious predicaments with an urgency not entirely shared by more secular fictions. The authority of the fictional imagination, as it speaks from the canonical text, assumes a cultural and a spiritual force.

The case of literary approaches to Scripture strikes me as an instructive one because it exposes so vividly the uncertain zone of aftermath in which our culture stands vis-à-vis the Bible. It may be only for a minority that Scripture remains unambiguously authoritative, yet most of us continue to feel the pressure of authority exerted by this extraordinary collection of ancient writings. From the humanist perspective, and, indeed, from many religious perspectives as well, Scripture no longer speaks in one clearly prescriptive voice, but its resonances still carry into the recesses of our spiritual and political imagination. The Bible has been a central force of coherence and continuity in our culture, and so it may not be, after all, surprising that many are now impelled to discover how they might close the gap interposed by modernity between themselves and the biblical texts.

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Graffiti & Other Art Forms

James Gardner

SINCE 1932, the Whitney Museum in New York has regularly staged exhibitions of the work of those American artists whom the curators have considered the best and the most representative of the moment. The format of this year's Biennial Exhibition, which ran from March 13 to June 9, required "multiple examples," usually two, of work done over the past two years by the invited artists. As for the criteria of selection, the curators wrote in this year's catalogue that their objective was "twofold: to make qualitative judgments at a moment of multiple critical standards, and to assemble as cohesive an overview of current art activity as possible." Since "ideological and stylistic variety characterizes recent art," they continued, "no single aesthetic dominates this exhibition." The great variety of media included painting, sculpture, photography, film, and video.

Despite the careful disclaimers, certain attitudes —one would hesitate to say they added up to a "single aesthetic"—did emerge from the show, which was perhaps more tendentious than any other in the history of the Whitney Annual and Biennial Exhibitions. But to appreciate these attitudes one needs first to have some sense of the show as a whole.

IN PAINTING, the Whitney Biennial reflected the vogue now enjoyed by graffiti artists, whose works have soared overnight to a value about twice that of a used subway car, such as formerly they had adorned *gratis*. While the main result of this new fashion has been to make a few indigent souls rather more prosperous than they would ever have dreamed possible, in the work of at least one of them, Kenny Scharf, there is something of genuine appeal, and part of that even artistic.

One of the first paintings the viewer saw at the Biennial was Scharf's enormous and variegated mural, *When the Worlds Collide* (the name is taken from an early 60's science-fiction film). Though the subject matter was open to great latitudes of interpretation, it appeared that we had before us the landscape of some other planet, in the foreground of which, painted in a diabolical red, were two friendly biomorphic natives welcoming us aboard. In the corners were seen entanglements of helices, and rapidly vibrating spots which the viewer was probably to interpret as something vaguely nuclear. In addition there were mechanomorphic heads, and, amid comets and whirling tornadoes, the disembodied eye and eyebrow of what appeared to be a beauty of the early 60's type. It was only natural that the more conscientious viewer—and the Biennial attracted many such—would read into this painting some stern portent of approaching nuclear holocaust, although it was also possible to perceive in it the traces of unqualified good humor.

In addition to graffiti art there was also evident at the Whitney the kind of abstraction that seemed ready at any moment to take the plunge and to commit itself to full-fledged "figuration," as the curators put it. Of the five or so artists working in this mode, the most famous was Jedd Garet, whose contorted and vague forms have been seen in previous Biennial Exhibitions; even if his inclusion was justified in the past, however, this year's offerings did not show the signs of growth and maturation that the curators were presumably seeking in those artists whom they invited back. Gregory Amenoff's large, dense, Gothic landscapes managed to carry a certain conviction, though even in the evocation of their chosen mood one somehow felt they had not gone far enough. Much more appealing than this was a work by Doug Anderson entitled *I Conquered Weakness by Giving Into It*. Here a man fishing on an abbreviated jetty pulled up from the depths of the sea the skeleton of a fish, while in the background we saw a death's head, a bull, and other fearsome things. Predictably, the work did not have anything in it that responded exactly to the title, but it did create a convincing sense of volume in space, and the suggestion of uneasiness and perturbation was successfully done.

Because the Whitney has been more concerned in the Biennials to bring to light new talent than to confirm established reputations, most of the artists represented were either little known or of comparatively recent celebrity. But the curators are also interested to a certain degree in keeping

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JAMES GARDNER contributed "Is Caravaggio Our Contemporary?" to our June issue. His criticism has also appeared in *Art News* and the *New Criterion*.

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tabs on the more established artists, and so they included two works by Jasper Johns. These were not only among the best in the exhibition, but also among the best in his career. In one of them, done in encaustic on a canvas divided into halves, Johns created a majestic progression of three boxes placed at regular intervals and three more boxes irregularly spaced like paintings on a wall. These he filled with a series of loosely connected images: a death's head, the well-known optical illusion of an old hag who turns into a beautiful young woman, and a group of terrifying and indeterminate figures, all of which, as they bounced off and responded to one another, created a rich, complex rhythm. Though his second work, *Racing Thoughts,* was a little less distinguished, the too simplistic halving of the composition was relieved by the sophistication of the colors.

SEVERAL of the sculptors represented at this year's Whitney exhibition showed a far greater interest in pure formalism of the older sort than was in evidence among the painters. One of these was Donald Judd, the only other artist comparable in reputation to Jasper Johns. In keeping with his minimalist heritage, and like a feeble magician stubbornly trying to pull a rabbit from an unyielding hat, Judd has continued to seek in his metal and plexiglas boxes an effect that either is not there or that is too subtle to be perceived. At the Whitney show he confirmed himself to be a one-idea man, which is particularly unfortunate when the idea was none too promising to begin with.

John Newman, however, managed to achieve far finer, if slightly more traditional, results in the area of purely formal sculpture. One came upon his work—elegant and at the same time almost tribal in its spiralings of threaded steel—as a breath of fresh air, for here finally was someone who remembered how to create formal beauty without the buttressing of a specious intellectualism, which was the besetting sin of most of the other works on display.

Other surprises in sculpture were Robert Hudson's *Posing the Question*—a brightly colored, semi-abstract affair of steel pipes that suggested a man engaged in thought of a highly speculative nature—and two sculptures by Jo Anne Carson. Miss Carson's work was a curious example of three-dimensional cubism, though here the forms were much more clearly legible than those of the analytic period of Picasso to which they referred. But the principal virtue of her two works lay in the facility with which they created a sense of inexhaustible activity.

IN THE area of photography, curiously, there was not a single straightforward example of that art to be found at the Whitney. Most of the works of photography on display were to some extent "created" in the lab. Moreover, from a formal point of view even the best photographs were almost completely uninteresting; only when they were seen from a specific conceptual or emotional angle did they occasionally take on a certain beauty.

The works of Cindy Sherman, one of the darlings of the art market, were a good example of this, being large, rather banally colored, and often not quite in focus. Her talent can be understood only if one has seen more of her work than was on display here. Each of her photographs is to be viewed as if it were a still from an imaginary film, for which our own familiarity with the movies is supposed to provide the context. Only then can we appreciate that what she is practicing is less the art of photography than the art of performance, impersonation and high camp distilled through the photographic medium.

Joel Peter Witkin, another photographer represented at the Biennial, has made use of the archaic gelatin silver print to simulate Victorian photography of the sort that once delighted viewers with the new invention's ability to capture minute details. Surprising though it may sound, 19th-century photography tended to be much more finely and richly detailed than most of what is done today; and so under closer inspection these works by Witkin fell short, on the basis of sheer technical competence, of their Victorian prototypes. What they did well, however, was to parody that older society while remaining, in their surrealist strangeness, entirely modern. Like so much of the art in the Whitney Biennial, these works defeat description, but the reader may form some sense of their bizarreness when he learns that one of them depicted a four-armed naked man holding in his hand a pig's hoof, while in another a naked and obese woman, with the irradiating strands of her hair tacked onto the wall behind her, cradled in her arms what appeared to be the fetus of a horse, with a nearby monkey skeleton thrown in for good measure.

AS IN previous Biennial Exhibitions, the curators showed no stinginess this year in catering to environment and installation artists. Of these the best was, again, Kenny Scharf. His was a mixed-media installation titled *Closet #7,* occupying a sequestered hallway and the bathrooms and telephone booths of the museum's second floor. Its motifs bore a close resemblance to his paintings. The floor was paved in a durable silver paper, which, under gaudy ultraviolet lights and blaring teeny-bopper music, gave off a heady, feverish effect. One could be sufficiently taken with the work to conclude that it was not merely the incorporation of the bathrooms that accounted for the excited rush of people toward it. When I opened one of the doors, I was surprised to find that it was indeed a bathroom,

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and that it was still serving its original function —lighted, however, with a violet bulb, and sprayed all over with bright day-glow colors in such a way as to recall weekends in college dormitories.

Much less engaging was the work of a group of four artists who go by the name TODT (which is also the name of the SS general who served as Hitler's Minister for Armaments). This too was a multimedia piece, all the motifs of which were taken from everyday consumer items, neon lights, hamster-cage contraptions, and other things which neither merit nor lend themselves to summary, but which in their vague way aspired to say something morosely important about the human condition. The fact is that the formal configurations were wholly lacking in what used to be called aesthetic validity, and the "message" consisted of little more than a cashing-in on most viewers' willingness to read into things.

A similar "aesthetic" dominated a final installation work, also designed by four young artists in collaboration, which comprised not only items of the consumer culture but also work by other artists, some well-known and some even represented with their own pieces elsewhere in the exhibition. The title of the work was *Americana*. As one entered the largish room devoted to it on the ground floor, the first thing one heard was jazz in the background and the first thing one saw was a washer and dryer in the middle of the room and soon, to one side, a classic suburban television set decked out in imposing oak, atop which was set a recent issue of *TV Guide*. Tacked onto the walls was to be found a selection of the more popular American breads—Wonder, Pepperidge Farm, and so forth; detergents like Bold, Tide, and All; and Marcal paper towels. Into this installation were also incorporated art works of two kinds: those we were intended to laugh at and those in whose pointed sarcasm we were meant to share. The former category included plates embossed with paintings by Norman Rockwell, a bar scene by Leroy Nieman, and some of those cheap, "pretty" depictions of farmhouses and landscapes in oil that adorn the walls of diners throughout the land. In the latter category were works alluding to such matters as white supremacy, American imperialism, and other issues of related interest. One of these, according to a label, had been created by a group of high-school students, whose average age was fourteen or fifteen, and it consisted of those all-pervasive biomorphic creatures from science fiction so dear to graffiti artists, here painstakingly rendered in gold paint upon the matted-out pages of an entire chapter of Kafka's *Amerika*. One imagines the students were put to their task by solicitous elders, but curiously what they produced was artistically superior to the entire installation of which it was intended to be a part.

ALTHOUGH the artists who organized the *Americana* installation characteristically resisted identifying themselves with any specifiable doctrine, preferring instead to take refuge in pregnant innuendo, for them, clearly, this *was* America. Not their America, of course, nor that of the white upper-middle-class museumgoers who seemed in the main vaguely to concur with the meaning of the piece, but, simply put, the America of the sort of people who do not go to the Whitney. And taken in this sense, their installation was emblematic of an attitude struck over and over again in the Biennial Exhibition.

Indeed, for every work I have so far discussed—and I have limited myself to those that at least aspired to formal excellence—there was another at the Biennial whose only aim was to articulate ideas of a purely tendentious, if not a propagandistic, nature. Though uninteresting as individual pieces, in their conjunction these works bespoke a cast of mind that not only dominated the Whitney show but is a defining characteristic of the art world of today.

You had only to look at the Biennial catalogue to get a sense of this. In appearance this document was almost subversively unprepossessing. The title was printed in an improbable combination of yellow and gray, upon a rough darker gray surface, intended, I believe, to simulate the counter of the museum's bookstore where it would be purchased. The impression it gave was one of marginal but willful vulgarity, as though renouncing even the *quest* for formal excellence.

This renunciation must not be confused with the supposed cult of ugliness that we find, say, in the German Expressionists. It might rather be called a cult of tackiness—not that its acolytes would necessarily take this as a derogatory description. In one way or another, it pervaded many of the works displayed at the Whitney, especially those that incorporated elements of mass culture.

In understanding the choice of ingredients that have gone into this tackiness, it is important to appreciate that they are all American, and that for the most part they are incorporated into work by artists younger than forty. Superficially, there exists a certain similarity between the works of this new generation of American artists and the Pop artists of the early 60's—something of the same allusiveness, and the same faddishness. But there is also a difference. Pop artists selected their motifs from a mass culture that was contemporaneous with what they were creating; today's artists, in recurring to these selfsame images, are invoking associations that are manifestly outmoded, and which they now exhume from their earliest childhood.

These motifs have personal meaning for contemporary artists, bringing with them a wave of memories that extends back to the innocence of

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youth. But they are no more able to accept these images on their own terms than the Pop artists were able to do, and as much as they are fascinated by them, they are also repelled. The tone of this newest trend in American art is one of emotional dislocation, underscored by superficially cheerful forms. Every attitude the artist adopts is to be understood ironically, as if it were in quotation marks. Underlying the coy reverence for the icons of American mass culture which many of these works seem to project, there are unmistakably the marks of condescension, and of something worse.

The paradox of the Whitney Biennial is that it takes place in a society in which art and artists are more highly regarded than at any other point in the history of the world; and the Whitney, whether or not it chooses to acknowledge the fact, is at once the creation of this society and the proof positive that the artists to whom it has given quarter have "arrived." And yet, in case after case, the precondition for an artist's selection would seem to be the striking of a certain posture of disdain, if not contempt, for the very society that has engendered both him and the museum upon which the authentication of his work depends.

In this respect, no two art exhibitions could seem superficially so dissimilar as the Biennials at the Whitney and the Salons of 18th-century France. The artists of those days, it would be thought, were little more than the slaves and toadies of powerful and aristocratic patrons, and the works they created aspired to nothing higher artistically than blinkered obedience to the rules that had been laid down long before by a few illustrious progenitors. Yet it happens that the Whitney show is as important to the ambitions of today's artists as the Salons were to the artists of earlier days, and although there is not so direct a link between exhibitions and commissions as there was then, the fact remains that any American artist who wants to compete for big money and widespread recognition does not stand a chance if he has not received at least once this biennial anointment.

A further and more important resemblance derives from the fact that such exhibitions, now as then, cannot but represent society precisely as it is willing to be perceived. The historian from Mars whose only clue to life on earth in the 18th century was the paintings in the Salon of 1785 would have had to conclude that the society which had generated them was one of consummate peace and gracefulness, that all the women were beautiful and all the men noble in appearance, and that the sovereign who lorded over their proceedings was a great and benevolent man. That same historian, basing his opinion of us solely upon the Whitney Biennial, would be forced to conclude that ours was a nation of open immorality and that on the whole we were ugly, cynical, and lecherous.

We know, of course, that in neither appraisal would the Martian historian be correct. The 18th century did not have a premium on virtue and great men, nor is our age so conspicuous in depravity as our artists would have us believe. These impressions merely reflect the way each of the societies wishes to be perceived, the paradigm to which an artist, if he is to succeed in the art market of the day, must obediently conform. It is as unconscionable to the contemporary art world that a respectful portrait of Ronald Reagan should appear at the Whitney as it would have been that a disrespectful portrait of Louis XVI should have appeared in the Salon of 1785. The difference is that at least the viewers of the 18th century were skeptical of the images they were being sold. The modern viewer, by contrast, is likely to believe and even to relish what he sees, and by it to be confirmed in those feelings of well-bred *Angst* and dark foreboding which he has been taught to regard as appropriate to any informed assessment of the human condition.

In one of his poems, Emerson has the god Brahma say of his deniers, "When me they fly, I am the wings;/ I am the doubter and doubt." Although this is not the place to determine what true nonconformity in art would look like, we can say with confidence that most contemporary art that is designed to fly in the face of the "social order" is not so much a contravention of it as an unwitting part. So pervasive, and so glamorous, has the attitude of nonconformity become in recent years that (as Hilton Kramer has indefatigably argued) it has ceased to be what it was, and has become its opposite: the social order reconstituted. It is a fair guess that the vast majority of those viewers who felt like yielding a pious amen before each work of a suitable vanguardism were able to leave such convictions behind them at the Whitney as they left, and to resume the normal courses of their lives without too much of that alteration which an enlightened social conscience is supposed to produce in us. Through a convoluted dialectic, precisely this attitude of vanguardism has invented the terms in which the most durable elements of society now express themselves. History may never record a more insidious transmutation of values.

Whatever its effects on society, antinomianism of this sort is certainly an impediment to good art. But it is not the only one. Equally destructive is the craving at all costs for that most marketable of commodities, originality. With the Old Masters, innovation occurred when an artist was impelled either wittingly or unwittingly to take the next step toward what would then have been thought the perfection of his art. Giotto in extending Cimabue, Raphael in

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extending Perugino, were not really seeking something new, or "unique"; rather, they found their own gifts by studiously imitating their masters, but with such sovereign skill that ultimately something new was born. This originality might be compared with that of modern technology, in which all minds strive toward the same solution, and the most advanced at any given time is the one that will prevail. Even if we tend not to accept the notion of progress as being applicable to art, still it made perfect sense to the disciples of Raphael.

But like that other kind of consumerism that changes the color of a shampoo or the shape of its bottle in order merely to enhance its marketability, so the majority of contemporary artists are concerned with the new for reasons either of finance or of vanity. Surely there are some artists working today who have managed to create a genuinely unique style, but for every such artist, who can calculate the hundreds of others in whom the frenzied quest for originality has actually negated such restricted potential as they might otherwise have enjoyed? Earlier artists of only middling endowment, through adherence to a system of precedents, were able to create works of a certain limited beauty and appeal; today it is all or nothing, and this may explain why it should paradoxically be true that in an age in which so much art is constantly being produced, so little of it should actually contain as much as a breath of true inspiration.

Indeed, perhaps the most disturbing realization raised by the Whitney Biennial was that, with the exception of Jasper Johns and other older artists who were not represented this year, there seems to be little inspiration left in American art. The new American generation seems to have nowhere to go, and can only repeat ad infinitum its tiresome heterodoxies.

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A Dissent on Grace Paley

Carol Iannone

Grace Paley believes that art has a practical function—to make "justice in the world." And for that reason, she adds, "it almost always has to be on the side of the underdog." Like certain other writers who started out in the 50's, Mrs. Paley is concerned with "little people," mostly women, individuals with small-scale lives and low horizons, people harried or baffled by the disorderly rush of existence.

Mrs. Paley is a writer with a large reputation built on a small output. Considered by many to be a master of the short-story form, she has to her credit just three slim volumes after nearly three decades of writing. By way of explanation, she claims that "art is too long and life is too short." In her case "life" has included raising two children and now also embraces teaching, but mainly it involves politics. Indeed, Mrs. Paley's fight against injustice is not confined to her art. A long-time activist, she has for decades been a member of the War Resisters' League and has campaigned for draft resistance, prison reform, environmentalism, feminism, and the nuclear freeze; she has been distributing leaflets, signing statements, organizing protests, marching and/or sitting down for various causes since she opposed civil-defense drills as a PTA mother in Greenwich Village in the 50's.

Actually, Mrs. Paley's interest in radical politics dates from even before that, since she is, she tells us, a second-generation revolutionist/activist. Her Ukrainian-born Jewish parents agitated against czarist oppression in turn-of-the-century Russia, and one of her uncles was killed while carrying the workers' flag in 1904. While still in his teens, her father, Isaac Goodside, was arrested several times for revolutionary activity; he was finally exiled to Siberia in 1904. Her mother, Manya Ridnyk, was also exiled, by one report to Germany, by Mrs. Paley's own to Siberia. In that same year, the czar freed all prisoners under twenty-one in honor of the birth of his son. The pair took advantage of this opportunity to come to America in 1905, settling first on the Lower East Side and then in the Bronx, where Mrs. Paley was born in 1922.

Once in America, the young couple began to enjoy the "summer sunshine of upward mobility," as their daughter has since termed it, not without a trace of sarcasm. Isaac taught himself English by reading Dickens and became a doctor; Manya worked supportively beside him in the manner of immigrant women. Although her parents, according to Mrs. Paley, did not "stay radical," becoming instead "hard-working patriotic immigrants," nevertheless "they talked a lot about that period of their lives; they really made me feel it and see it, so there is that tradition." In addition, Mrs. Paley's uncles and aunts all belonged to different leftist political parties and attended lectures at Cooper Union and meetings of the ILGWU. "They were a fabulous generation," she asserts warmly. (Her other favorite generation is the one that came of age in the 60's. Thinking sorrowfully of "those kids in the Brink's case," she has mourned "a wonderful generation . . . idealistic, self-giving, and honorable," "that whole beloved generation of our children who were really wrecked.")

Mrs. Paley attended Hunter College for a while but soon dropped out. At age nineteen she married Jess Paley, a projectionist, had her two children, and in effect embarked upon the life that was to become the substance of her stories—the neighborhood, the block, the streets, the stores, the schools, the PTA, the kids, the playground, mothers sitting at windows, men and women askew, the generations at odds, "all the irremediableness of modern life," as she was to call it. The marriage virtually ended after three years, although it was not legally dissolved for twenty.

In 1959 she published her first collection, *The Little Disturbances of Man*, to fine reviews, and to special praise from other writers like Philip Roth, Donald Barthelme, Susan Sontag, and Herbert Gold. The book soon dropped out of print, but it became something of an underground classic, and was republished by a different house in 1969. In 1974 came her second collection, *Enormous Changes at the Last Minute*, which also received generally excellent reviews; and now this year her third, *Later the Same Day*,* of which the reviews have ranged from enthusiastic to ecstatic.

Whatever the final assessment of Grace Paley's art, her first collection did reveal a degree of talent and ingenuity. Her style can be fresh and explosive. She works by sound, allowing one idiosyncratic voice, complete with New York or Yiddish intonation, to shape content and perception through a kind of wryly comical perspective. Sometimes the technique fails—the perspective (as in "The Floating Truth," "A Woman Young and Old," "The Pale Pink Roast") being so limited or fragmented as to prevent a proper understanding of scope or significance. But other stories touch and move and prod and tickle the reader into the character's world. "Goodbye and Good Luck," "The Loudest Voice," and "The Contest" are examples—all, not coincidentally, on Jewish themes; later attempts at other voices (black, Irish, etc.) were less successful.

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By the time she was writing the stories that were to become her second collection, however, the Vietnam war had intervened and Mrs. Paley's radical sympathies were given new opportunities to flourish. *Enormous Changes at the Last Minute* accordingly reflects this deeper political involvement. Some stories openly celebrate activism. In addition, the little people are now identical with "the oppressed"—the poor, the young, runaways, welfare mothers, single mothers, pregnant teenagers, drug addicts, criminals. In general, the collection is less attractive than the first. Some of the stories still have a modicum of recognizable shape ("Faith in the Afternoon") but a good number are just skimpy throwaways, poorly thought out and obscure little fragments ("Debts," "The Gloomy Tune," "Living," "Wants," "Politics," "Come On, Ye Sons of Art"), suggesting that the author had other things on her mind.

WHAT were those other things? In 1969, Mrs. Paley was part of a delegation from the "peace" movement that traveled to Hanoi to receive three American pilots who were prisoners of war. According to Mrs. Paley, the decision to release the pilots had been prompted by the "humanitarian tradition" of the Vietnamese. She wrote of her experiences in an essay entitled "Report from the DRV" (Democratic Republic of Vietnam) for *WIN*, the official organ of the War Resisters' League.

Although the North Vietnamese did not lack for prominent Americans to proselytize for their cause, they must have been especially gratified at the solicitude displayed by Mrs. Paley. To her hosts she wondered aloud about the wisdom of releasing the three prisoners, who might return to America only "to make bad propaganda" for Hanoi. She marveled at how well the pilots were treated. No abuse of them was permitted, she wrote in her report. Medical care was immediate, thorough, and sustained throughout detention.

The Vietnamese even had a philosophy regarding these captives—these "madmen," as Mrs. Paley terms them. "The pilot in the sky was a killer to be hunted and brought down, but the pilot on the ground was a helpless man in their hands, though certainly a war criminal, to be cared for if sick, and eventually to be rehabilitated out of his American insanity if possible." As for the means of this rehabilitation, a pilot might be taken to see at close hand the land and people he had bombed from thousands of feet above ground, or brought to the zoos and museums of Hanoi, presumably so that he might be impressed with the value of the civilization he was bent on destroying. A particularly original and generous-hearted tactic involved treating the man to a birthday party "to remind him of his mother and family. That he was born from them—from human beings, not to kill innocent people, not to end up in this prison camp," in the words of a Vietnamese official quoted by Mrs. Paley.

Mrs. Paley's passion for the "people's war" of Vietnam flared onto paper once again in 1975 when she wrote a fiery protest against the latest depredation of the American empire—the airlift of orphans and babies of mixed American-Vietnamese parentage. She argued fervently against the lift, which, she claimed, would deprive "those small survivors" of the "fruits of so many years of revolutionary patriotic struggle."

REGRETTABLY, given her sharp eye for the extraordinary detail, Mrs. Paley has apparently elected not to comment on the "fruits" of the Vietnamese "revolutionary patriotic struggle" *since* 1975. Lest anyone imagine her to be mortified over recent disclosures of Vietnamese Communist brutality, however, she has supplied an explanation for her silence: "I'm not over my Vietnam anger yet," she insisted in a recent interview. "Having poisoned them, we're starving them. Our whole relation to Vietnam is so shameful I can hardly talk about it."

Thus it is not from Mrs. Paley that we will learn that at about the same time she was thrilling to tales of Potemkin birthday parties, Vice Admiral James Stockdale was being tortured by his Vietnamese captors, held in hand and leg irons, kept for weeks in blindfold and painfully tight cuffs until he was "reduced to a blind crippled animal shitting on the floor."

Stockdale's case was typical of how the North Vietnamese treated American prisoners whom they were not planning to use to beguile itinerant peaceniks. And what was done to our own men, incredibly enough, seems negligible when compared with what has been and is being done to the Vietnamese people themselves. Leaving aside the hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese who have fled the horrors of Communist rule, Vietnam now holds about 500,000 political prisoners in horrendous "reeducation" camps—it is estimated that more than a million have passed through at different times, including former North Vietnamese soldiers who had been held prisoner in the South and are therefore considered ideologically tainted. From well before Mrs. Paley's 1969 visit, the notorious Camp of Return (meaning return to dust) was in the process of slowly murdering all but 23 of its 2,600 inmates. One survivor of another camp reported seeing as many as 250 persons a day starving to death.

As monstrous as their government is, the Vietnamese have not forgotten who else must share responsibility for the devastation of their country. Tran Nhu, a survivor of seventeen years in North Vietnamese camps, has written that the Vietnamese people have suffered as much from Hanoi's "blind unquestioning supporters throughout the world" as they have from their own rulers.

HAVING done her part to bring peace to the tormented Southeast Asian subcontinent, Mrs. Paley moved on to even greater good works in 1974 when she went to Moscow as a delegate of the War Resisters' League to the World Peace Congress. Upon her return, she again wrote up her exploits for *WIN*, and excerpted for the wider readership of the *Village Voice* a section of which she must have been particularly proud.

In Moscow, this self-described anarchist found herself feeling like a "Russian patriot" (just as she had earlier felt patriotic about Vietnam; the United States, by con-

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trast, she has described as "a nation with tens of thousands of nuclear bombs, army bases, weapons factories"). She exclaims over "Mother Russia" and thinks of Uncle Russya, killed while carrying the workers' flag in 1904. Like a Soviet Carl Sandburg, she evokes the bustle of Moscow life—the people warmly dressed, "the children in magnificent fur-lapped hats," the girls of rosy countenance, all rushing with high energy on their daily rounds, shopping, talking, walking arm in arm, happily visiting until late hours.

Yet despite this cheerful scene, Mrs. Paley knows that all is not well in the workers' paradise. Indeed, she and fellow activists Noam Chomsky, Reverend Daniel Berrigan, David McReynolds, Dave Dellinger, Sidney Peck, and Reverend Paul Mayer signed a statement calling attention to the plight of Soviet dissidents, which caused an uproar among the American delegation at the Congress even though it also contained plenty of nasty comments about their own country and its various campaigns of internal and external persecutions.

Statement in hand, Mrs. Paley and Father Mayer made the rounds of the available dissidents, Andrei Sakharov among them, offering their support and demanding in return that the dissidents renounce U.S. atrocities around the globe. The Americans had anticipated that this was not going to be an easy task. Even before the Congress, the novelist Vladimir Maximov, author of *Seven Days of Creation*, had shocked Father Mayer with his retrograde view that "the Vietnamese and Communism would have dominated the world if the U.S. had not bombed and smashed Vietnam." In other ways, too, the Soviet dissidents resisted the Americans' blandishments. Sakharov explained patiently, "Our conditions here are such that you do not understand," while his wife Yelena Bonner exclaimed, "Thank God for the United States."

MRS. PALEY, a trouper, did not confine her lobbying only to vulnerable dissidents. In the section of her report printed in the *Village Voice* she relates how she, Father Mayer, and one Maris Cakars bravely challenged Alexei N. Stepunin, Secretary General of the Institute of Soviet American Relations, who reminded Mrs. Paley of one of her "condescending but lovable uncles." They confronted him with the issue of Soviet dissent (while also troubling to reassure him that they did not agree with the dissidents' political positions). The obliging Secretary General expressed surprise: he had thought they "understood that no one had said that the Soviet Union was a democracy. It was a dictatorship of the proletariat. They had no choice but to do what the proletariat wanted them to do. The proletariat did not want them to publish Solzhenitsyn; it was not interested in hearing from those second-rate poets with bourgeois longings."

The clever Mrs. Paley recognized that this was a line—although she and her companions were "also very much against bourgeois longings." The trio pressed their point more apologetically. After all, they explained, "we could not demand the freedom of the imprisoned Vietnamese, the Brazilians or Chileans or South Africans without including in those demands freedom for the thousands of political prisoners in Russian camps." The Secretary General countered by telling them how much better things were now than in "Stalin times." They agreed. As the Secretary General began to grow restive, Mrs. Paley prepared her final shot. "Alexei," she began coaxingly,

> Russia is powerful and rich like my country. It doesn't *have* to worry about free speech, free assembly, free Samizdat, free underground papers. It can have all that, we do at home. We have had nearly half-a-million people at one time in Washington shouting protest into the windows of the White House and the Houses of Congress, and still our government does exactly what it likes. It has managed to bomb and torment the Vietnamese people for ten years. You too can have freedom of speech at home and continue to strongarm Czechoslovakia. You can eventually have as many automobiles and street-corner meetings as we do and you can export terror instead of containing it. It's a question of confidence. You have no confidence in your true strength.

And how did the Secretary General respond to this extraordinary analysis? Mrs. Paley reports with some pride that he looked at her "with a wondering expression and then he threw his head back and laughed a first-class Russian basso laugh." One can just imagine what a deeply satisfying laugh this outburst of raffish schoolgirl effrontery afforded the lovable Alexei Nikolaievitch.

(Gratified by this response, Mrs. Paley improves on her theory with some follow-up thoughts that she may or may not have shared with the jovial Secretary General. "What pigs we Americans are," she exclaims as if with fresh insight. "Not only do we consume one-third of the natural resources of the earth but with all that fat ease, at least one-third of the natural freedoms of man. Then we leave to the rest of the world awful struggles for food, warmth, and shelter, along with oppression and tyranny, their certain companions.")

BUT alas, it was time for Mrs. Paley to return to the detested land of "bourgeois longings." The first night back, as fate would have it, she and Father Mayer, loaded down with "gifts, bulletins, position papers, and final commission reports," threw themselves into a cab which happened to be driven by a Soviet émigré. They began to talk. The driver admitted that life in Russia was in some ways easier. "You don't have to worry about every dollar." But here, he continued, "he could live a different life if he wanted, any kind of life, it was up to him, he liked that, now he was used to it." Mrs. Paley judges this incident to be "an appropriate and moral end" to her Moscow journey but, perhaps uneasy that the cabdriver has tipped the scales of judgment in the wrong direction, she does not let the matter end here:

> The Russian dissidents who come to the United States nowadays are all called émigrés (by themselves, the media, the U.S. government), a French word whose meaning includes the idea of class. Those tens of thousands of others thrown up out of steerage, stored and stacked in tenements of Delancey Street and

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> Rivington Street, were called immigrants, another class. Yet they too came here for the shining pleasures of the First Amendment. Under cover of that brightness, talking all the time, their children have paid taxes for death and silences in other parts of the world. The émigrés will have to know that.

This, from one just returned from the very heart of death and silences.

For the most part, Mrs. Paley's brand of activism has aroused as much admiration as her fiction. "A Woman of Principle" went the headline of a *Time* box accompanying the review of her most recent collection. "These Four Women Could Save Your Life" was the title of a piece on her and three other anti-nuclear activists; an adjoining photo of Mrs. Paley had her looking like a visionary, eyes flashing into the distance. Interviewers are agreeably impressed with her sweetly untidy appearance, and see a connection between her warm womanliness and her politics: "It's this pleasure in caring for others," one has suggested, "that makes her activism seem so undogmatic and natural, a lyrical extension of the kind of work women have always done." Critics marvel at the six or so days she has spent in jail and at the risks she has taken in signing documents that might have brought federal prosecution.

Critics also find interesting links between her art and her politics. "Start by trying to save a few lives on paper, and you might end an activist like Paley, protesting the waste of lives in the Vietnam war," goes one clever analysis. The critic for the New York *Times Book Review* calls Mrs. Paley "one of the few who write about people who actually believe in things passionately (for example, feminism, helping the poor, civil rights) and say so.... This is fiction of consequence." *Publishers Weekly* relates admiringly how Mrs. Paley's stories "show political commitment to humanitarian causes 'as part of ordinary people's lives.'"

Mrs. Paley herself proudly allows that her writing has grown more political over the years, that her characters are now seen to be living and talking their activism: "how to save the world—and quickly." And she has always readily admitted that her political commitments have affected the quantity of her output ("I'm easily distractable"). But the influence her politics has had on her work goes beyond relative superficialities like these right to the very substance and form of her imagination (as the Marxists might have told us), and shows how a writer of some ability can founder on the shoals of ideology.

In one of Mrs. Paley's stories, the heroine, a writer, has a conversation with her father about the nature of her craft. The father pleads with her to write a straightforward story in the manner of Chekhov, with recognizable characters, with beginning, middle, and end, the whole informed by a tragic sense of life. But the heroine, who is clearly Mrs. Paley herself, defends her quirky, elliptical, inconclusive, plotless style as proffering more hope. "Everyone, real or imagined, deserves the open destiny of life," she declares. Her idea seems to be that the Chekhovian style forecloses life's possibilities, while writing like her own, full of whimsical condensations and lacunae, keeps them alive. This is probably the way she means her art to make "justice in the world," as she has put it—to preserve by the imaginative act the open destiny that life itself denies.

But in fact there is something in the working of Mrs. Paley's imagination which does less to free than to confine. The notion of the open destiny even becomes itself a kind of tyranny, precluding choice, achievement, change, or progress. An example is the view of Jewish history that Mrs. Paley filters through Faith, a recurrent character often taken as her alter-ego. To Faith's mind, Jews are meant to represent some quintessential idealism for the rest of the human race—the newspaper in the Children of Judea home to which Faith's parents retire is entitled *A Bessere Zeit*, a better time; Jews are supposed to float free of the quotidian (upside down, perhaps, like the figures in the paintings of Marc Chagall). But the Jews of today, and especially in Israel, have defaulted on their charge, and so must be dismissed:

> I believe in the Diaspora, not only as a fact but a tenet. I'm against Israel on technical grounds. I'm very disappointed that they decided to become a nation in my lifetime. I believe in the Diaspora. After all, they *are* the chosen people. Don't laugh. They really are. But once they're huddled in one little corner of a desert, they're like anyone else: Frenchies, Italians, temporal nationalities. Jews have one hope only—to remain a remnant in the basement of world affairs —no, I mean something else—a splinter in the toe of civilizations, a victim to aggravate the conscience. . . . I hear they don't even look like Jews any more. A bunch of dirt farmers with no time to read.

To continue to fire Mrs. Paley's imagination, it seems, it is necessary not only to have been an underdog but to remain one.

Something similar happens in her view of women. Jews having passed the cup of pure innocence, women now fill in as conscience of the race in Mrs. Paley's work. She condemns the "masculinist enterprise of war," and the evils of the "man-owned state"—the Vietnamese orphan airlift, for example, is something only men could have thought of, she wrote in *Ms.* (When an experienced airlift worker wrote in answer that the operation had on the whole most certainly been executed by women, Mrs. Paley's reply simply failed to acknowledge this point.) Her male characters tend to be self-absorbed, befuddled, childish. In "The Long-Distance Runner" (from *Enormous Changes at the Last Minute*), Faith says of men: "First they make something, then they murder it. Then they write a book about how interesting it is." Mrs. Paley does allow men a necessary place in her world (mostly for having sex and making babies), but the really important connections are among women and children.

Yet Mrs. Paley's conception of women seems to demand that they be (like the wandering Jews) at least somewhat unattached—single women bearing children, abandoned wives, welfare mothers, many "unmarried on principle."

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Faith almost always has a man around, but it's not always the same man. Other heroines lack men; some have men but no husbands, or at least no husbands of their own, and even in longstanding relationships the characters are casually unfaithful. It is as if, in Mrs. Paley's imagination, secure marriage collapses the "open destiny" and somehow supports patriarchy, injustice, war, and nuclear arms. What marriages do appear in her fiction tend to be traps for husband or wife.

Unfortunately, the alternatives to marriage are also traps. Mrs. Paley's characters may display movement, but their lives lack any distinct sense of development. In "An Interest in Life," for example (from her first collection), a sexy young mother of four is flatly abandoned by her sexy young husband. She struggles in her tough, street-wise way with the single-mother welfare life and shortly takes up with a former suitor, now a not terribly contented family man. But she suspects that her hubsand will return one day, and at the story's end she imagines what his homecoming will be like—a triumphant replay of their previous ardors, which got her into trouble in the first place. Similarly, Faith, from story to story, gets older and her children grow up, and like her friends she travels "around half of most of the nearly socialist world," but she never really seems to change.

Even the *idea* of enormous changes at the last minute, the "anything can happen" feeling that Mrs. Paley's admirers profess to find in her stories, turns out to be not really about change in the sense of progress or development or insight but about change as the pull of chance, time, age, impulse, lust, desire, fear, passion, and assorted other random pressures. Sometimes the enormous changes are fantastical (a child born of an older single woman and a young activist inspires a song which is "responsible for a statistical increase in visitors to old-age homes"; the middle-aged Faith pays a visit to the apartment she grew up in and is welcomed by the current occupant, a heroic welfare mother; the post-menopausal Faith contemplates having a baby). Sometimes the stories involve experiences that are too large for the people undergoing them, and too large for the author as well. In "The Expensive Moment" and "Ruthy and Edie," radical mothers wonder about their children, though without any insight. In "A Little Girl," an unhappy runaway is brutally raped by a degenerate and then dies gruesomely by being thrown or throwing herself out the window. Mrs. Paley uses a first-person narrator, a friend of the rapist, to tell this story, but neither she nor the narrator is able to make any sense of it, and "A Little Girl" remains simply a sensationalistic horror story.

TRUTH to tell, Mrs. Paley exhibits a grim determinism about life that is the opposite of hope. Occasionally she even acknowledges this tendency, while managing to make it seem like an asset. Counsels Faith: "It's very important to emphasize what is good or beautiful so as not to have a gloomy face when you meet some youngster who has begun to guess" the bitter truth about life. A dialogue between Faith and her son Tonto (short for Anthony) also illustrates this tendency. They are discussing Abby—the daughter of Faith's friend Selena—one of "that beloved generaton" of the 60's, in this case wrecked by drugs. Tonto wants to know why Faith and Selena "never realized about Abby," presumably meaning why they never saw her problems until it was too late. Faith offers what amounts to an excuse: "Listen, Tonto. Basically, Abby was O.K. She was. You don't know what their times can do to a person." (The "times" also form Mrs. Paley's explanation for the fate of "those kids in the Brink's case," who, as she neglects to mention, incidentally managed to take the life of a bank guard as they were wrecking their own.)

Here we have an inadvertent literary insight into Mrs. Paley's own temperamental incapacity to assign responsibility to individuals, which is something deadly in a writer of fiction. Perhaps it is because Marxist regimes view people not as responsible, accountable individuals but as variables, human "units" in some larger system, that Mrs. Paley feels such kinship with them. But no artist can really afford to see people this way, through the wrong end of the telescope. What "their times can do to a person" is simply an alibi, a way out of the task of understanding character.

Of course Mrs. Paley has her *ideological* sense of the importance of human individuality, but she cannot make this come alive in her work. In "Samuel," a young boy, probably Hispanic, is fooling around with some friends while riding between two subway cars. A sudden stop is induced when the emergency cord is pulled by an older man, envious of the boy's freedom, and Samuel falls to his death on the tracks. Samuel's mother becomes inconsolable. Even after the birth of another child, "she immediately saw that this baby wasn't Samuel . . . never again will a boy exactly like Samuel be known." The message is clear, but Samuel was not actually ever known to us in the first place, because Mrs. Paley did not have the patience to fill him out.

Similarly, in "Faith in the Afternoon," we hear the story of a woman afflicted, Job-like, with one awful punishment after another. The story seems intended to stimulate an awareness of the terrible vulnerability of the human condition, but the woman's sorrow is never realized, we just hear about it. In the very same story, Mrs. Paley does achieve a moment of genuine pathos, between Faith and her father, but she turns from it abruptly (as her father turns from Faith), ending the story.

THUS the most enormous change at the last minute is Mrs. Paley's way of copping out on her material, leaving the reader hanging with curious contrasts, baffling leaps, deep-sounding but puzzling last lines—all the truth falling through those empty holes.

Paradoxically, this self-appointed champion of little people manages to make their lives even littler than they supposedly are. It is not life that is so limited, it is Mrs. Paley's imagination, an imagination formed and finally trapped by ideology and therefore entirely unable to make much of the world as it is, let alone suggest a means of transcending it.

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Charles Powers is assistant professor of sociology, Indiana University. He has published several articles on Pareto in *Sociological Theory* and *Contemporary Sociology*, among other journals.

Renata Girola is in the department of sociology, Indiana University, and she received her degree from the Universita Statale di Milano, Italy.

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"Well and Truly Sold"

VIETCONG MEMOIR. By TRUONG NHU TANG, with DAVID CHANOFF and DOAN VAN TOAI. *Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 350 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by ARCH PUDDINGTON

OF THE many millions whose lives have been transformed by encounters with Communism, there is a special class of people whose experiences have been uniquely tragic. Members of this class have existed in every country where Communism has triumphed, and can be found even today in nations like El Salvador which face the threat of a Marxist takeover. They are nationalists and democrats who maintain a single-minded commitment to the replacement of corrupt despotisms by forces favoring liberal reform and an independent foreign policy. Their motives are honest and unselfish. Typically, they share roots in the intellectual and social elites of their societies, and their political activities often result in imprisonment and torture, the alienation of their families, and the abandonment of lives of respectability and affluence.

They are also, and this is what distinguishes them from like-minded countrymen, willing to collaborate with Communism in working to achieve a just social order. To be sure, they are not oblivious to the nature of Communism; they recognize that their allies are something more than mere agrarian reformers. Nonetheless, they rationalize their alliance with Marxism by arguing that no feasible alternative exists or by convincing themselves that the Communists' solemn pledges of coalition government are genuine. Inevitably and unfortunately, they learn that the victory of the "progressive" forces and the expulsion of the detested foreigners bring not the promised era of peace and reconciliation, but a totalitarian system far more oppressive than anything imaginable under the old dictatorship.

In Truong Nhu Tang we have an ideal example of the liberal nationalist whose vision of an independent society was ultimately betrayed by his Communist partners-in-arms. Truong was a prominent figure in the National Liberation Front (NLF), the formal name for the Vietcong. He served as Minister of Justice in the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG), an entity resembling a shadow government which was formed at the height of the Vietnam war principally as a means of influencing world opinion, especially the burgeoning anti-war movement in the United States.

While today the NLF and PRG are but dimly recollected, during the war they were crucial exhibits supporting the argument that the American government was wrong to identify the Vietnam conflict as fundamentally a struggle against Communism. According to the war's critics, it was the Vietcong, and not the North, who were chiefly responsible for the prosecution of the fighting. Moreover, the NLF was widely regarded as a broad coalition which included but was not dominated by Communists, with a vision of South Vietnam's future grounded in democratic principles. Above all else, the NLF was thought to be an *indigenous* Southern force, fiercely resistant to the control of outsiders.

The perception of Vietcong autonomy was periodically reinforced by North Vietnamese denials of an intention to impose Communism on the South. The South, it was said, presented "a special and unique situation, very different from the North." According to Le Duan, who succeeded Ho Chi Minh as leader of the North Vietnamese Communist party, "the South needs its own policy." Another party official, Pham Van Dong, emphatically declared to Western visitors that "No one has this stupid and criminal idea of annexing the South."

Such reassuring statements were meant not only for Western consumption. The North was also sensitive to the apprehensions of potential Southern sympathizers who were suspicious of the Vietcong because of its identification with Communism. Although the North's propaganda did not entirely dispel the anti-Communist fears of reform-minded Southerners, the repeated disavowals of imperialist ambitions did have an effect, as many prominent Southerners began to support the opposition after the 1968 Tet offensive.

Truong himself came from the upper echelons of Saigon society. His father was a prosperous businessman who was relatively comfortable with French colonial rule. Truong became committed to the anticolonial cause while a student in Paris during the 1940's; he was particularly impressed by Ho Chi Minh, who granted Truong and another student a private audience and whom Truong even today describes in saintly terms.

Following the collapse of the French, Truong took up the life of a respected businessman, and held a series of important positions in commerce and banking. He describes his political views at this time as vaguely liberal, strongly nationalist, and not notably anti-Communist. He continued to regard Ho Chi Minh with awe and reverence:

> My years of struggle to understand the character of Ho Chi Minh had convinced me that at heart his motivations were similar [to Truong's], and that the Leninism he espoused was an accretion that served the cause of Vietnamese nationalism. I would have been ready to accept almost any regime that could achieve real independence and that had the welfare of the people at heart.

Truong maintained his tolerance

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for Communism despite his familiarity with reports of Northern atrocities committed during the collectivization of agriculture and the brutalities inflicted in the name of "people's justice." But since the sources of these accounts were fervently anti-Communist Catholics who had fled the North, Truong dismissed stories of Communist terror as "not especially credible."

Truong eventually joined the opposition in the South, exploiting his contacts in the government and Saigon society to further the Vietcong cause. He was eventually betrayed, jailed, and tortured by the Thieu regime and, except for a stroke of luck, might well have been executed. Instead, in 1967 he and several other NLF members were exchanged for two captured Americans, and Truong spent the rest of the war with other NLF political leaders in remote parts of Vietnam and Cambodia.

At first, Truong and his fellow Southerners were treated with a certain deference by his North Vietnamese deliverers. As Minister of Justice of the putative future South Vietnamese government, Truong spent much of his time preparing a new legal code focusing on such noncontroversial issues as workers' rights and putting off such potentially contentious questions as land reform and civil liberties. Then, as the fighting began to turn against the Thieu government and the prospect of total victory drew nearer, the attitude of the North underwent a not-so-subtle shift. In 1971, with the war raging about them, Truong and other NLF officials were suddenly informed that they were to attend a three-month course in Marxist-Leninist theory. For Truong, the whole experience was traumatic. The Southerners were harangued about the significance of the class struggle and proletarian internationalism by dogmatic cadres who abused and insulted the pupils. Although Truong was somewhat mollified when senior Northern officials apologized for the behavior of their colleagues, he later admitted that the whole procedure amounted to a variation of the interrogation technique whereby a brutal questioner alternates with one with a friendly attitude.

In any event, all pretense was abandoned by the North once military triumph was secured. Non-Communists like Truong were to play no role in the shaping of the new society, which was to be "a single monolithic bloc, collectivist and totalitarian, in which all the traditions and culture of the South would be ground and molded by the political machine of the conquerors." As added insult, the North moved posthaste to ensure that the war received its proper historical interpretation, an interpretation which belittled or ignored altogether the contribution of the NLF. A prominent party historian wrote: "The Provisional Revolutionary Government was always a group emanating from [North Vietnam]. If we had pretended otherwise for such a long period, it was always because dur-

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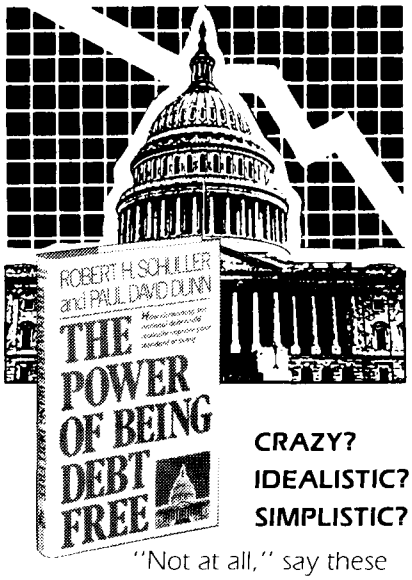

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ing the war we were not obliged to unveil our cards."

Truong now had good reason to recall the prophetic words of his father during their final meeting while the son was incarcerated in a Saigon jail. "You will see. [The Communists] will betray you, and you will suffer your entire life." Even more distressing was the fact that the mass reprisals taken by the Communists reached into Truong's own family, with two of his brothers sent off to a dreaded reeducation camp. Truong himself drove them to the camp, accepting on faith the pledge that the reeducation period would last only thirty days. Although Truong was able to use his influence to secure the release of one brother, the other, a physician and hospital administrator, was still languishing in the camps at the book's writing, nine years later.

Truong also describes a gruesome party—he calls it a funeral—organized to take note of the official demise of the Vietcong, an obligatory step following the forced unification of North and South. The party official who organized the event hired the Rex Dance Hall, once a sleazy magnetic pole for the most corrupt of Saigon's demimonde. Truong writes:

> About thirty of us were present. . . . We ate without tasting, and we heard without listening as some revolutionary music was cranked out by a sad little band. . . . We even managed to choke out a few of the old combatants' songs. But there was no way to swallow the gall in our mouths or to shrug off the shroud that had settled on our souls. We knew finally that we had been well and truly sold.

THERE is something profoundly sad about this book, and the sadness is, if anything, reinforced by Truong's attitude toward his experiences. Today, living an exile's life in Paris (where he eventually arrived after a typically harrowing escape on the high seas), he believes that the course he followed was the only one available. He remains convinced that Ho Chi Minh was not unalterably committed to Communism, and that Ho would have pursued a different policy had the French or the Americans made gestures of accommodation. On the other hand, his suggestion that Vietnam would have been spared a totalitarian future had the U.S. used its influence toward the creation of a coalition government is a bit more plausible. But even here, Truong underestimates the likely reaction of the Communists, who would have gone to extraordinary lengths to undermine any arrangement which they themselves did not control. The survival of a non-Communist coalition could only have been secured by massive American intervention, the very thing to which Truong was most fervently opposed.

Yet despite Truong's lingering confusion about the ultimate nature of his country's Communist oppressors, *Vietnam Memoir* contains a number of extremely important messages, which are altogether relevant to contemporary political debates. For the restive young elites of the underdeveloped world, there is the message that there is something far worse than corruption and excessive American influence—a brutal totalitarianism which provides neither social justice, freedom, nor genuine independence. For the non-Communists who have thrown in with Marxist forces in countries like El Salvador, the message is the suicidal folly of accepting Communist vows about pluralism and civil liberties. Similarly, for Americans tempted to accept Communist promises of domestic freedom and international nonalignment, there is the message of North Vietnam's breathtaking cynicism in its dealings both with naive Westerners and with its own allies in the South.

ONE can sympathize with the choice made by Truong Nhu Tang, trapped as he was in a tangled web with no really appealing alternatives. But knowing what we know about Vietnam—not to mention revelations of Communist duplicity in countless other countries—one can only conclude that those who continue to argue that a society would be better off under Communist rule are at best engaged in a monumental act of self-deception.

The Sense of Awe

TOWARD A MORE NATURAL SCIENCE: BIOLOGY AND HUMAN AFFAIRS. By LEON R. KASS. *Free Press. 370 pp. $23.50.*

Reviewed by
RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

LEON KASS of the University of Chicago knows that he is thinking against the mainstream. At the same time, his labors provide reason to hope that the stream can be turned. The stream is contemporary science, notably the biological sciences which Kass believes are on the edge of reshaping humanity in ways that may be very bad for human beings. This new book by Kass is not, however, another jeremiad against the dangerous illusions of scientific progress. It is rather an appeal for science to become more genuinely scientific. Most ambitiously, Kass argues that a "more natural science" could provide grounds for ethical reasoning about what is good for man and what is the good that man is for.

A physician, scientist, and philosopher, Kass is keenly aware of the "two cultures" by which science is divorced from philosophical and moral reflection. He has little patience, however, with those in the humanities who from a distance rail against the "reductionist" and "dehumanizing" propensities of modern "scientism." He believes that the corrective is to be found, if it is to be found at all, by entering more deeply into the scientific enterprise itself in order "to reopen foreclosed lines of inquiry; to reawaken the sense of awe and wonder, itself more human than even the desire for mastery—in short, to encourage and nurture the disposition of thoughtfulness about who we are and ought to be." The way to bridge the two cultures, Kass persuasively argues, is by a "philosophical reconstruction of the scientific side of the divide."

Among the lines of inquiry that

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need to be reopened, according to Kass, are some of the most obvious and abiding questions that men ask about themselves and the world of which they are part. What distinguishes man among the animals? How is the mind related to the body, and is thought noncorporeal? Is the indefinite extension of the human life span scientifically possible or humanly desirable? Is an infinitely malleable nature to be mastered to serve our purposes, or are there purposes in nature which we are to serve? Kass contends that scientists are so preoccupied with what is to be discovered through the microscope and telescope that they cease being curious about what is evident to the naked eye. The choice, he insists, is not between scientific technology and philosophical reason. The task, rather, is to renew the scientific enterprise by restoring the sense of wonder and the passion for discovery which launched the enterprise in the first place. While respectful of mystery, Kass is impatient with all mystifications, whether they be the mystifications of anti-scientific Luddites or of a scientific industry that tends to smother mystery under a mass of laboratory detail.

Toward a More Natural Science is much more than an exercise in the philosophy of science, however. The book abounds in specifics about genetic engineering, new technologies for "making babies," and the ethical dilemmas facing medicine today with respect to defining death, the use of "extraordinary" means, and the meaning of "health care" itself. (In the last connection, Kass produces a vigorous defense of the Hippocratic Oath, arguing for its superiority over the recent "Principles of Medical Ethics" produced by the American Medical Association.) The attention of the popular press is fixed on "test-tube babies" and "breakthroughs" toward a cure for cancer. And the not always unworthy ambitions of scientists produce a succession of new sensations which sustain the hope that "Science" will find the answer to our human problems. In the process, cautions Kass, we may be losing sight of the problem, and the glory, of *being* human.

Of course, lamentations about the depersonalizing and dehumanizing works of science are nothing new. What is distinctive about Kass's argument is that it is a scientific appeal for science to attend again to the presuppositions that make science both possible and humanly beneficial. The urgency of the appeal rests upon the claim, convincingly advanced, that we may through new technologies be changing what "Man" means without first asking what might be the meaning of "Man" within the scheme of nature. Kass contends that Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* is not futuristic fiction but a chilling depiction of the ideas and technologies which are now reshaping the human reality. What Huxley foresaw is now fact in biomedical technologies such as laboratory fertilization and embryo transfer, genetic screening, DNA recombination, genetic engineering, organ transplant, and behavior modification.

AMONG the consequences of the uncritical pursuit of "progress" in these areas is what C.S. Lewis described as "the abolition of man." That is to say, the human engineering that is proposed and now largely possible could result in one generation's imposing its technology to reject all previous ages and dominate all subsequent ages so that it becomes, in effect, the master of the human species. But in becoming master, man also becomes the victim, for every new power won by man is a power over man as well. As Lewis wrote, "In every victory, besides being the general who triumphs, he is also the prisoner who follows the triumphal car."

While Kass does not indulge the apocalyptic, he does demonstrate how today's debates and decisions are pushing us toward a future of uncertain—but not unthinkable—transformations. For example, questions engaged by feminism and disputes about marriage and the human family are linked to technologies of cloning, genetic engineering, and new ways of making new kinds of babies. Such technologies not only make marriage and family obsolete, but also bypass completely the human male. Cloning, for example, requires only human eggs, nuclei, and (at present) uteri, all of which can be supplied by women.

It is little wonder that these developments are welcomed by some, including "persons eager to remove all restraints from human sexuality or to render obsolete the biological differences between the sexes, others who see the destruction of marriage as a needed step in limiting population growth, and yet others who find the modern nuclear family a stifling and harmful institution for education and child-rearing." Kass is not unsympathetic to those who have problems with the family, but he wants us to ask whether we are really prepared to accept as desirable the elimination of biological kinship from the foundation of social organization. Kass concludes that "the burden of proof should fall to those believing our humanness could survive even if the biological family does not."

It is improbable that one could write a book today on biomedical technology and what it means to be human without addressing the debate over abortion. Kass examines the usual questions with an unusual sensitivity to both their complexity and awesomeness. He significantly advances the debate by spelling out why one reason for abortion that is most widely approved is in fact most disturbing in its implications. The reason in question is that the fetus is defective in one way or another. To abort in such instances, Kass argues, is to go beyond the usual disputes about whether or not this is a human life that is being terminated. That question has already been answered in the affirmative. In such cases it is agreed that this is a human life that would be welcomed as a child *were it not defective*. The decision to terminate that life, says Kass, strikes at the heart of the most fundamental meaning of equality, which in turn is fundamental to liberal democracy.

THE concern for liberal democracy and its moral presuppositions, although made explicit only a few times, underlies Kass's entire project. The characteristic refusal of contemporary science to think

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about the meaning of man and nature, the rejection of such questions as "meaningless," is rapidly putting us into a position where we can give no intellectual defense of the kind of society that is appropriate to the people we aspire to be. In Kass's wide-ranging reflection on philosophy, ethics, and science, Nietzsche is not mentioned, but the specter of nihilism appears on every page.

As may be evident by now, Leon Kass has written a profoundly disturbing book. He obviously does not wish to be a doomsayer. In fact at points he seems tempted to retreat to the vulgar pragmatism that suggests we will somehow muddle through. But then he is prevented by his knowing that "Pragmatism is," in the words of Bertrand Russell, "like a warm bath that heats up so imperceptibly that you don't know when to scream." The scientific details in this book—what can now be done and what is proposed for the technology of tomorrow—are not in serious dispute. In dispute are the consequences for the human community, and whether scientists and citizens have an obligation to bring moral reflection to bear upon those consequences. Kass succeeds in addressing alarming developments in a non-alarmist manner. His approach throughout is that of reasoned, even humble, inquiry into the awful things that happen when we abandon our sense of awe. Kass is not screaming but he is urgently inviting our attention to the fact that the water is getting very hot.

The Politics of Place

CANARSIE: THE JEWS AND ITALIANS OF BROOKLYN AGAINST LIBERALISM. By JONATHAN RIEDER. *Harvard. 290 pp. $22.50.*

Reviewed by PAUL S. APPELBAUM

CANARSIE sits along Brooklyn's southern edge, a narrow haven for the white middle classes, between the ghettos of Brownsville and East New York to the north and the marshes of Jamaica Bay. From these bare and brutal facts of urban geography, Jonathan Rieder, a Yale sociologist, has constructed an intriguing ethnography that empathically—albeit ambivalently—conveys the anguish of urban ethnics over the "politics of place." In addition to giving us an impressive portrait of the people of Canarsie, however, Rieder is after bigger and ultimately more elusive game. He is seeking to explain the disaffection of Canarsians with the liberal descendants of the New Deal and, by extension, to understand America's recent rightward shift.

The realities of geography have always been important to the people of Canarsie. Its remoteness from Manhattan—the threat, "I'll knock you all the way to Canarsie," is still occasionally heard on the streets of New York—and its insulation from the teeming chaos of more accessible Brooklyn neighborhoods lent Canarsie the ambience of a small village until well after World War II. Only in the early 1960's did large developments of one- and two-family homes spring up, squeezing out the small farms that were dotted through the area. Then as urbanization overtook New York City's last wilderness, the neighborhood underwent a demographic change. To the pre-1960 residents of "Old Canarsie" (to use Rieder's term), who were overwhelmingly Italian, there were now added lower-middle-class Italians and even larger numbers of lower-middle-class Jews.

In Rieder's view, this change is the key to understanding the unrest and partial political reorientation the area was to experience during the decade of the 70's. Unlike the migration of wealthier Brooklynites to suburban Long Island, the 60's influx to Canarsie was not entirely voluntary. As the neighborhoods bordering Canarsie —Brownsville, East New York, and later East Flatbush—became increasingly black and Puerto Rican, lower-middle-class Jews and Italians who had lived there for a generation felt compelled to flee. Beneath the panic that attended this flight to the perceived security of white Canarsie was a sense of profound loss that engendered a determination not to run again. In Canarsie, many decided, they would make a stand.

The voices of the Jews and Italians of Canarsie are faithfully transcribed by Rieder. "Canarsie people don't have a lot of money," notes one Jewish woman. "We got a little house and it's a big achievement. We don't want to lose what it took our entire life to build." The fear of having to run again that permeates Canarsie's consciousness is often expressed as a nervous bravado: "I am not a racist. I just want to keep my community pure. I sunk every dime into my house and I don't want to be chased. I won't be chased."

The occasion for these sentiments was the realization which overtook the community in the early 1970's that Canarsie was unlikely to stay lily-white. There were orders from New York City's Board of Education to integrate Canarsie's schools. Black families were pressing at the margins of the neighborhood, looking for the same sanctuary from the ghetto that the earlier white migrants had sought. Canarsie's response was angry: demonstrators outside a neighborhood junior high school jeering black children, boycotts of classes, fire-bombing of black homes, beatings on the streets. The 1970's were tumultuous times in Canarsie.

All this Rieder accounts for persuasively in his exegesis of geopolitics on a microcosmic scale. Even groups like the Jews and Italians who were not historically racist could be expected to respond sharply to the threats white Canarsians associated with the immigration of blacks: increased crime, deterioration of the housing stock, and a way of life which, they believed, was a rejection of their own values of family loyalty, hard work, and independence. By the end of Rieder's account one is hardly surprised that a lower-middle-class community with its back to the ocean should respond as Canarsie did.

WHEN Rieder comes to explain what happened in Canarsie in terms of a shift away from liberal

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principles, however, he is less convincing. One problem is that the "liberalism" of his title is never defined, leaving the reader little choice but to follow the author's lead in conflating it with adherence to the Democratic party. But considered in those terms it is doubtful that Canarsie could be said to have "rejected" liberalism. The Italians of old Canarsie constituted a naturally conservative community, in the sense that they sought to preserve traditional values. In 1968, the Italians gave a third of their votes to Hubert Humphrey and nearly 60 percent to Richard Nixon; this was well *before* racial unrest hit the area. The Nixon landslide of 1972 and the Reagan victory in 1980 added only marginally to that figure. Little needs to be explained here.

True, the Jews of Canarsie demonstrated more striking changes. From nearly 80-percent support for Humphrey in 1968 they slid to approximately 45 percent for McGovern in 1972. They then rebounded in 1976 to support Carter with 80 percent of their vote, and split roughly evenly between Carter and Reagan in 1980. But the link that Rieder seeks to draw between the "politics of place" and Jewish Canarsie's presidential concerns is in fact hard to discern. An important role in swinging Jewish votes was played by the relative degree of support for Israel expressed by the candidates in 1972 and 1980. None of the contenders spoke directly to the fears white Canarsians had of losing their homes and neighborhood.

On the local level, where one might expect concerns over neighborhood security to be played out, politics changed even less. Backlash organizations flourished for a time, attracting publicity and support, and there were protest votes for Republican and Conservative party candidates through the 1970's. But these could not obscure the continuing dominance of the local—and, by any definition, liberal—Democratic machine. Not a single anti-machine candidate reached office in those years, despite overt attempts to play directly to the neighborhood's fear of blacks. Furthermore, by the 1980's the backlash organizations had disappeared and Canarsians appeared resigned to some integration of their enclave.

If attitudes to ethnic change cannot account for political fluctuations in Canarsie, neither do they account for "the precarious state of liberalism in the mid-80's," as the book's jacket puts it. The embrace of the Republican party by Midwestern farmers and urban residents of the Sunbelt will not be explained by looking north across Brooklyn toward the pulsating and ever-threatening ghetto.

STILL, though Rieder's study of Canarsie is less enlightening about politics than it might be, it does provide a sensitive look at the psychology of urban ethnic groups and, not incidentally, of the liberal sociologists who study them. As Ried-

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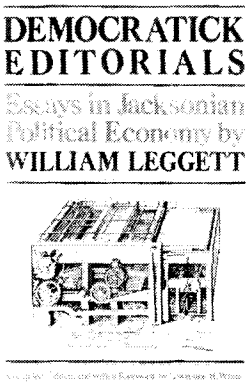

Democratick Editorials

Essays in Jacksonian Political Economy
By William Leggett

Compiled, Edited, and with a Foreword
By Lawrence H. White

William Leggett, writing for the New York *Evening Post*, the *Examiner*, and the *Plaindealer* in the 1830's based his editorial views on the principle of equal rights to liberty and property.

He held that principle to mean that law may not discriminate among citizens, benefitting some at the expense of others. Strict application of this view led him to favor minimization of government power.

In these essays Leggett brings his views to bear on the issues of the Jacksonian period. Since many of the questions of principle in his day recur in our own, the editorials are of contemporary as well as historical significance.
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er narrates the Canarsians' self-conscious struggles with their feelings about blacks, he himself grapples with the dilemma of the participant-observer who finds his empathy for his subjects conflicting with his own political and ideological views, and who thus has to find means of distancing himself from them (as by relying on the often repeated formula that their understandable fear of crime and decay does not justify racism).

This book undertakes two difficult tasks, ethnography and political analysis. It succeeds marvelously at the first. As the people of Canarsie well know, these days one often has to settle for less.

Managing Managers

A PASSION FOR EXCELLENCE: THE LEADERSHIP DIFFERENCE. By TOM PETERS and NANCY AUSTIN. *Random House. 437 pp. $19.95.*

INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: PRACTICE AND PRINCIPLES. *By* PETER F. DRUCKER. *Harper & Row. 277 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by JULES COHN

IN OUR society of large organizations there is a ready market for manuals of technique, advice, and consolation concerning the many problems afflicting the managerial class, and the outpouring of books and articles on the subject is consequently ceaseless. Most of these works—*Lateral Thinking for Management, High Output Management,* "Managers and Lovers," to name a few recent titles—attract only a specialist readership of mid- and upper-level business or government executives. But occasionally one of them finds a broader public.

Such was the case with *In Search of Excellence* by Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, published in 1982. Its tremendous popularity, encouraged by a high-powered promotion campaign, made it the best-selling business book of all time, a publishing event that became a cultural phenomenon. This book, purportedly just another treatment of how some top-flight businesses were run, identifying the key issues they faced as well as the "secrets" of their success, actually provided very little information about the enterprises it discussed. Like certain contemporary treatments of Central American politics or life in the People's Republic of China, *In Search of Excellence* eschewed, in the words of its authors, the "baleful influence" of facts and figures, concentrating instead on an upbeat message that no doubt helps to explain its great success. At a time of critical conditions in key sectors of the economy, notably the "smokestack" industries, Peters and Waterman painted a picture of a never-never land where the most intricate business dilemmas were readily resolved, where the "seven hunks of complexity" (by their count) were overcome, and where "people can blossom, develop self-esteem, and be . . . excited participants in society."

How was this beautiful world achieved? Not through bottom-line analysis or financial planning, or through the other standard, arduous techniques employed in the real world of the corporation. Such "hardware" approaches were rejected by the visionaries of excellence. For them, a "people orientation," expressed through "coaching and evangelism," was the factor separating excellent from nonexcellent companies. "Soft is hard," they told their readers, and their message was translated into fifteen languages.

IN THE period since the publication of this tract, at least a dozen of the companies chosen for idealization by Peters and Waterman have suffered serious financial setbacks, and the overall well-being of several others has fallen open to question. "Oops," wrote *Business Week,* after a look at the balance sheets. Yet *A Passion for Excellence,* the just-published sequel to their first book, is already a best-seller in its own right. This time, Peters (now "Tom" on the title page and throughout the text) has a different co-author, Nancy Austin, herself a co-author of *The Assertive Woman,* "the first book written to help women take practical steps toward positive, assertive behavior."

Here again the goal is to "keep things simple in a complex world." But in format, at least, the second *Excellence* is far from simple. It is a 437-page hodgepodge of anecdotes, homilies, case studies, and lengthy "inspirational" passages drawn from the business press, the *Harvard Business Review,* and *Mary Kay on People Management.* It is no easy matter to extricate a theme from the welter of secondary material, lists, maxims, and descriptions of "momentum-makers" that make up this self-styled Whitman's Sampler of a book. In brief, however, Peters and Austin propose to discuss the problems of innovation and entrepreneurship in the public as well as the private sector, and to offer some of the action-oriented guidelines for which management consultants are notorious.

To be sure, theirs is a timely and important subject, one to which the President has been speaking lately, and an informal and entertaining treatment of the weighty questions raised by the issue of innovation in stagnant industries would be a refreshing change from the run-of-the-mill treatises on this subject. But *A Passion for Excellence,* like its predecessor, provides little in the way of nuts-and-bolts analysis or empirically-tested recommendations. Aside from some observations concerning the potential value of small work groups and the dangers of overreliance on cost-cutting when flexible budgets can foster new ideas, they fail to come up with useful suggestions. And they sidestep substantive discussion of the intriguing paradox implied by the very concept of "managing for innovation," settling instead for a series of pep talks and for propagating their doctrine of "MBWA"—Management by Wandering Around.

If the content of the second *Excellence* falls short of the mark, its rhetoric is of some interest, for it bespeaks the influence simultaneously of the hard and the soft Left. Workers are to be "empowered to take possession" of their own achievements; "radical decentralization" is to be brought about

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through a "certain militancy." At the same time, we read that more and more "brave souls" with "lonely lives" are banding together in a move from "tough-mindedness to tenderness," and that the reactionary values of "controlling and arranging" are to be replaced by a "visceral form of spiritual energy," for "beauty is universally available." Thus these two mainstream management courtiers, by no means avowed ideologues, mindlessly filter the anti-business attitudes of the 60's and 70's into a brew evidently palatable to millions—but utterly worthless to anyone interested in understanding the actual world of business today.

FOR a systematic treatment of the problem of fostering innovation, one which prefers the "genuinely attainable" to the perfectly beautiful, readers may sober up with the newest book by Peter F. Drucker. Drucker, of course, is the management consultant with the loftiest reputation and the lengthiest bibliography of them all. Since he came to this country from Germany in 1937 he has carved out a career helping executives devise logical methods for coping with tangible problems through tradeoffs and the "optimization" of limited resources, rather than by reaching for "soaring meanings." Though given to repeating himself in more than twenty books and at least five times as many articles, he has also distinguished himself (and the profession he helped create) through patient exploration of the social and political implications of even the most mundane business issue. For though he writes about the problems of managers, his underlying subject is always the importance of conserving legitimate authority in society, the need for civility, the danger of chaos.

Responsible management, Drucker once wrote in the language of political theory rather than that of the executive suite, is not just a technique but a constitutional necessity. And he explained in similar terms the practice of "management by objectives" (MBO)—the widely used method of performance evaluation that he developed many years ago. By employing the principle of self-control to transform objective needs into personal goals, MBO was conceived as a means for making "the commonweal the aim of every manager." "This," wrote Drucker, "is genuine freedom."

WHERE the *Excellence* books advise us "to be true to our own aesthetic," in the words of Tiffany's people-oriented Walter Hoving, Drucker's observations in *Innovation and Entrepreneurship* are specific and down-to-earth. Beginning with socioeconomic analysis, he notes that a major shift has taken place in the foundations of our economy, as traditional employing institutions are being supplanted by high-tech industries and also by a growing number of small- and medium-sized entrepreneurial companies in a multitude of fields. He has some cogent comments, too, about the emergence of the "fourth sector," partnerships between private and public institutions for the delivery of such services as health care, education, and fire protection.

In contrast to the *Excellence* teams, Drucker warns against the "incongruity between perceived and actual reality" on the part of business leaders and public policymakers. Effective entrepreneurship is achieved by hard work, not by intuition or by wandering the corridors. "In fact," he writes, "intuition is no good at all if by 'intuition' is meant 'what I feel.' For that usually is another way of saying 'what I like it to be' rather than 'what I perceive it to be.'" Drucker's hard-headed proposals include a careful assessment of the structure of the market, alertness to changes in processes of work as well as in overall demographics, and attention to capital-formation opportunities.

It was William Hazlitt who wrote that "the most sensible men to be with in society are men of business, who argue from what they see and know, instead of spinning cobweb distinctions of what things ought to be." Peter Drucker pays a similar compliment to the business people who make up the bulk of his readership, drawing their attention to goals that are realistic while reminding them of their obligations as organization leaders in a free society. Open to the challenge of new ideas in our legislatures, schools, and administrative agencies as well as at Coca-Cola and IBM, he is wary of the unreasoned remedy, the diagnosis that is a delusion, the style "which sings, which has rhythm, which has passion." If we are to address the problems, both domestic and international, now facing our economy, including declining productivity and outdated management practices in established industries, his is a voice that can guide us while the excellence-mongers go on singing their siren songs.

With K

LIVING WITH KOESTLER: MAMAINE KOESTLER'S LETTERS 1945-51. Edited by CELIA GOODMAN. *St. Martin's. 204 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by EDWARD PEARCE

IN 1984, faced with an incurable and painful disease, and being a dogmatic supporter of voluntary euthanasia, Arthur Koestler took his own life. He also permitted his physically fit and much younger third wife, Cynthia Jefferies Koestler, to join him in committing suicide. One need not be a militant feminist to draw the line at this sort of high-thinking wife sacrifice, but Cynthia was extravagantly devoted, a worshipping secretary who placed too little value on herself, perfect material for self-immolation. Koestler's *second* wife, who is the author of this collection of letters, was something rather different.

Anyone reading these letters, deftly edited by the twin sister, Celia Goodman, to whom they were written, must be torn between the fascination of last Wednesday's political-intellectual gossip (the nonsense uttered by one giant of the French intellectual scene to another about a politics now more remote than Villon's snow) and the personal quality of the girl who wrote them. Mamaine Paget Koestler, corresponding here during the six

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years of her time with Koestler (whom, Kafka-like, she calls "K"), first as lover then as wife, had a bright mind of her own. She was a good pianist (a pupil of Joseph Cooper), a quick-study linguist able in Tel Aviv to scare off someone tampering with the Koestlers' jeep by calling out in biblical Hebrew, "Thieves in the Night" (the title of Koestler's most famous book about Israel), and equally capable, when faced with a windbag bearing a preposterous reputation, like the swelling and pouting André Malraux, of remaining good-naturedly unimpressed.

MAMAINE was clever but uncorrupted by smartness. These letters to her sister were not intended to impress, to score, to be one-up, but they were written *in medias res*. The six years which they cover encompassed the descent of Stalinist Communism upon Eastern Europe and the profoundly felt and feared prospect that such regimes might come to power in France and Italy. In this period the repellent Maurice Thorez of the French Communist party looked at times like a credible candidate for such control. Koestler, the lapsed Communist author of *The Gladiators* and the violently anti-Communist author of *Darkness at Noon*, was then engaged in intellectual polemics and, especially, in setting up the Congress for Cultural Freedom. The latter, notwithstanding the now much advertised fact that its funds came from the CIA, was an honorable attempt to gather up and focus to a decent end the best minds of what might be called the un-Left.

During this period Koestler, a Jew born in Hungary, was also heavily committed to the cause of Israel, while English, non-Jewish Mamaine was involved quite as much, damning British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin as "a swine" (heavy language for this gentle girl) and writing with sympathetic understanding of the Irgun. Interestingly, Koestler, she reports, was "very anti-terrorist, anti-IZL [Irgun], anti-government, and rather anti-Mapam (left wing, pro-Russian tendencies). So he's depressed and melancholic."

Depressed and melancholic Koestler recurringly was—in Israel, Wales, France, Italy ("unfortunately K loathes Florence so we have not had a nice time here"), London, and Pennsylvania. Taking politics with intense seriousness, given to fits of alternating gloom and destructive rage, he was involved in some of the most memorable quarrels of his day. Occasionally he would lash out physically. In Israel he punched a man whom he had supposed to be a policeman but who was actually the head of the Israeli air force. In France he *did* hit a policeman, not a wise thing to do in that country, as well as giving Albert Camus a black eye. And, alas, from time to time he hit Mamaine: "He went quite mad with fury and struck me a stunning blow to the head. It's only the third time but it's three times too often."

For all that Mamaine was long-suffering, however, she was categorically not a foolishly submissive woman. She loved and forgave until she could take no more, and at the end of six years finally left, without regret. For the three years remaining before her pitifully early death at thirty-seven she stayed in close, friendly touch with this man whom she understood as well as anyone did. Shrewdly she remarks, apropos a furious argument between Koestler and a group of sympathetic English Labor politicians, that the real reason for this and so many other savage, self-eviscerating quarrels was "some subconscious urge not to have any friends."

SOME people, however, were entirely worth quarrelling with. Malraux, for one, had for a considerable time been the object of Koestler's idolatry, something very difficult to understand today. The two of them are exposed here in a report of Koestler's over-earnest examination of the intellectual foundations of Gaullism (from which Malraux was strap-hanging). In the middle of a conversation about the philosopher Henri Bergson, Malraux interjected, "*Je suis le plus grand philosophe du monde.*" "Do you mean you or Bergson?" asked Koestler. "*C'est moi qui parle,*" replied Malraux. When asked about the entourage of the General, some of whom had a very unpleasant odor, he answered unsmilingly, "*L'entourage du Général c'est moi.*"

Trying to explore the virtues of the French Right was altogether a great mistake. The Koestlers got a notion of its true character when, in the newly created state of Israel, the wife of the French Consul inquired "if I was Jewish, then if K was." Learning Mamaine was a Gentile, she said next, "It must be extraordinary being married to a Jew, isn't it?" The same lady, a *comtesse* (for whatever that is worth), tried to recruit Mamaine—in Israel, in front of her husband—to an all-Christian dinner party from which Koestler would of course be excluded, although "as the *Comtesse* kept repeating, she loved all writers and especially admired K."

As for intellectuals, the company among whom Koestler moved most easily at this time were the predecessors or harbingers of today's neoconservatives and their European equivalents. But at the time of the Congress for Cultural Freedom Conference in West Berlin in 1950, that circle took in a wide spectrum, including very many German Social Democrats and British Laborites—men of the genuine, if moderate, Left. Carlo Schmid, who was to be one of the godparents of the revived German Social Democratic party, Ernst Reuter, the Socialist mayor of Berlin, and Ignazio Silone were involved, as was Bertrand Russell. (A few years later Russell would be marching against U.S. bases and asserting that during the Cuban missile crisis President Kennedy had acted more wickedly than Hitler; in 1950, however, he still had a weakness for a preemptive nuclear strike against the Soviet Union!)

Mamaine took a cool view of much of the oration-making in Berlin. She was perceptive about Koestler's own manipulative talents—a residue of his days in the Communist party—that were amply on display there. Thus, he proclaimed at the conclusion of the conference, "*Die Freiheit hat die Offensive ergriffen*" ("freedom has taken the initiative") while taking care to see that the manifesto pushed through was written by himself, in consultation with close allies. But perhaps

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one should not disparage the lessons to be learned from the Left when it came to marshaling the un-Left. And Koestler had certain advantages for this task. An ex-Communist, ex-journalistic colleague of Willi Muenzenberg (the most gifted practitioner of Soviet agit-prop in Europe), a man who had traveled in Stalin's Russia in the 30's as a Hungarian comrade in good standing, and who was involved in the Spanish Civil War all the way to Franco's death row, he could claim to be experienced.

In the American section of this book one finds Koestler taking a contemptuous view of liberals: "K says he is allergic to American liberals. I asked him if Republicans weren't worse and he said 'Probably, but it takes me a bit longer to get bored by them because I don't know in advance every single thing they're going to say.'" Mamaine's own reservations concerning Republicans make interesting historical evidence of mutual European-American misperceptions in 1950. She was not troubled by their economic conservatism half so much as by their isolationism. "If they [the Republicans] came to power, no American troops at all would go to Europe." It wasn't so, but that is how it seemed.

Between Koestler, the touchy and egotistical cosmopolitan, and the decent, slightly anti-intellectual company of working politicians whom he met in the U.S. there subsisted a profound channel of incomprehension. The regular Republicans at this time were of course heavily anti-Communist, but they were not *interested* in Communism. One kindly Senator said that only one member of his household had read *Darkness at Noon*—his gardener! In Pennsylvania, politicians were vastly less engaged by the intellectual crusade which Koestler wanted to recruit them for than by the sensible business of getting reelected.

Mamaine patiently chronicles Koestler's attempt to get across to these politicians, which she found very similar to his unhappy conversations with the Gaullists. The effort periodically drove Koestler into the sort of exasperation which offended many Americans but which stemmed from frustrated rational argument. No wonder, she recalls him saying, that "there are so many fellow-travelers and liberals in America, they just don't feel their way of life is worth defending; and if one says one must defend relative freedom against total unfreedom they don't see what you're talking about; if I had been brought up here . . . I would be a 'liberal' to this day, probably."

For Koestler the problem was larger than America's distance from Europe. With the Marshall Plan and NATO, the U.S. was after all responding vigorously and generously to Europe during this entire period. However, no bridge linked this politically conscious individual trained in Marx (but educated also in the systematic lying and betrayal of the Comintern) and the unagitated conservatism of a continent not burned by the same fire. Anxiety and abrasion were the doom of any deeply experienced Central European Jew who tried at that time to bring the bad news from Prague and Budapest to Senator Brewster. The response was complacency or, as in the rise of Joseph McCarthy, cynical, calculated, and ignorant overreaction.

But this want of high seriousness was not confined to Americans. Koestler had also expected French and British politicians to share his perceptions, to rally and to be organized for a high and earnest purpose. And no politicians are like that. George Orwell, of whose impending death one letter carries the sad murmur, had remarked in a different context, "only a very clever man could be such a fool." Intellectuals can indeed exercise influence—politics is open to all sorts of persuasion and forceful reasoning—but not in the peremptory way of Koestler's Berlin manifesto-making.

Koestler, a man on the side of right, was furiously and savagely impatient for its triumph. Mamaine was thus witness to a political venture which her husband, so little the deft politician, was custom-built to get wrong. Her own recurring rough times—sweet consideration alternating with actual

"Yale sociologist **Jonathan Rieder** believes the Democrats are losing followers on cultural issues. His soundings among Italians and Jews in the Canarsie section of Brooklyn (a long-time solid Democratic neighborhood) have found that they now associate liberalism with 'profligacy, spinelessness, malevolence, masochism, elitism, fantasy, anarchy, idealism, softness, irresponsibility, and sanctimoniousness.' (Wish we'd said that!)"

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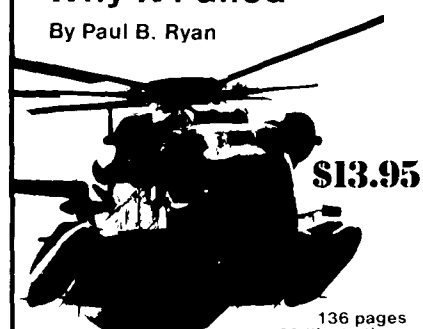

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bodily assault—almost certainly owed much to the frustrations of his miscasting. Yet to be the companion of the man who had written *Darkness at Noon*, who during their time together was working at the most challenging of contemporary autobiographies, and whose mind ranged across human knowledge, was worth it. "I shall consider my life well spent since I have spent six years of it with K."

Mamaine thought so anyway.

Beyond Fear

GERMANY TODAY: A PERSONAL REPORT. By WALTER LAQUEUR. *Little, Brown. 240 pp. $16.95.*

Reviewed by DAVID GRESS

IN 1979-80, with the explosion of the "peace" movement, the question of the political health and future role of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Atlantic alliance returned to the Western agenda with a vengeance. After spates of articles in periodicals, we are now seeing the first full-length assessments of what is going on in West Germany. Walter Laqueur's contribution to this debate is both timely and eminently sensible. Given the alarmism occasionally expressed in other quarters, the fact that Laqueur errs slightly on the side of optimism is perhaps on balance not a bad thing.

Two basic themes run through Laqueur's report, which includes chapters on the younger generation, on political intellectuals, on the economy. The first is that the last decade has indeed seen serious unrest, unease, and tension in the West German body politic, culminating in challenges to the established principles of foreign and security policy and in illusions regarding the relationship with East Germany. Fear is greatly in fashion: the Lutheran Church, once *righteously militant* under Luther's own slogan "Fear Not!," now summons tens of thousands of otherwise very unreligious young people to protest U.S. policy and NATO strategies of Western defense under the slogan "Have Fear!" Lutheran pastors also hold senior positions in the Social Democractic party, where they form the hard core of the anti-American majority that forced Helmut Schmidt from office and the party from government. One of the aspiring leaders of the Social Democrats, Oskar Lafontaine, writes a book entitled *Fear of Our Friends* (meaning the Americans), in which he argues that the U.S. is a bigger danger to peace than the Soviets, who only want to defend themselves, and that West Germany should consider leaving NATO and relying for its security on a lightly armed, territorial militia. "Once heroism was in fashion," Laqueur writes, "now it is *Angst*."

The very dimensions of the Great German Fear of 1981-83, however, are evidence for Laqueur's second, dominant theme. Germans are peculiarly given to exaggerating momentary uncertainties, and West German media, political intellectuals, political organizations, and publishers are especially quick to emphasize and exploit moods and fashions. But in fact, Laqueur argues, there is "more level-headedness, more common sense in German politics now than ever before." The fear and the corresponding pessimism and despair alleged by publicists—and blamed by them primarily on a U.S.-caused escalation of East-West tensions—are largely illusory, not merely in the sense that Europe is not about to become a nuclear battlefield, but in the sense that most people do not feel afraid themselves but think *others* are afraid. Laqueur cites some telling poll data to this effect: 79 percent of West Germans describe themselves as content, but over 50 percent think that others are not content. Similar figures apply to those under thirty, whose alleged fear of the future, of nuclear war, of unemployment, and of the oppressive nature of liberal capitalism is often invoked as evidence of the profound malaise of West German society.

THE best part of the book is perhaps the second chapter, a comparison of old (pre-Hitler) Germany with the present. Even the smells of nature are different, says Laqueur, in an account of the virtual loss of solitude in a country over twice as densely populated as southern Connecticut. Sixty million souls now inhabit 40 percent of a land formerly containing 80 million (17 million more live in East Germany). Berlin, once the center of Europe, is now a remote outpost in hostile territory, divided by a wall that symbolizes both totalitarian terror and the failure of Western will. Gone is the old balance between the business and industrial culture of the West and the open spaces and forests of the East; the psychological impact on the survivors is incalculable.

In subsequent chapters Laqueur deals with the protest movements of the 1960's and the so-called "new social movements" of the 1970's and 1980's, including the Greens and the peaceniks, along with their sympathizers and supporters among the intellectuals. Of the Green movement he writes that "in its high-mindedness and confusion it is a perfect illustration of the state of mind of wide sections of the young generation as a whole," but that its long-term endurance is doubtful. The ideological generation of those who became the Marxist dogmatists of the 1970's is being succeeded by a generation whose identity is still unclear, but which shows signs already of the turn to self-satisfaction and narrow aims familiar from American Yuppies. Laqueur wisely refrains from judging the relative merits of these two equally disagreeable types of generational character.

West German intellectuals are much more conformist than their French, British, or American counterparts. Laqueur characterizes them exactly: "The intellectual . . . will sign public appeals—against the threatened deportation of a left-wing Turkish émigré, against American intervention in Central America and elsewhere . . . he is very much against arms races . . . he used to be mildly philo-Semitic but has no use for Israeli policy now," and generally he is "less interested in events and trends abroad than in the past."

DAVID GRESS *is senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. His assessment of West Germany,* Peace and Survival, *will be published in the fall by Hoover.*

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This self-imposed isolation allows leading figures like Guenter Grass to present outrageous distortions of NATO strategy as fact, to denounce alleged U.S. plans for a first nuclear strike against the Soviet Union, and to argue that the new anti-Communism in French political attitudes derives mainly from the domestic need of French intellectuals to react against the influence of Sartre and not to any realization of the true character of the Soviet Union.

Less satisfying is Laqueur's treatment of the national issue. In this regard, indeed, the book's title is misleading, since it is not a report on Germany but on West Germany. That almost everyone, including people who certainly know better, today refers to the Federal Republic as "Germany" only makes the error worse. It is like speaking of the states to the west of a line drawn from the Dakotas south past Nebraska, Kansas, Arkansas, and Louisiana as though they were "the United States," and this forty years after a war in which the entire population of the East and South had been driven out or killed, and the population of the Middle West and Central states subjected to a totalitarian tyranny from which a fifth had subsequently fled.

To recall that West Germany is not Germany is also to recall that responsibility for this discrepancy rests largely with Hitler, somewhat less with Stalin, but to a considerable extent also with Roosevelt. Stalin's main purpose in foreign policy was always to destroy Germany, which was his leading rival for power on the European continent. So fixed was this purpose that he even engineered the destruction of all those in the German Communist party whose loyalty to Communism in a German form was greater than their slavish submission to Stalin, even though these machinations materially helped bring Hitler to power.

The destruction of Germany as a major European power was completed with the help of the U.S. and Britain, and to ensure the permanence of the result, the ruined country was divided and remains so to this day. Largely by the efforts of Germans themselves, West Germany rose again almost miraculously to become the continent's chief economic power. This half-country, however, has remained unwilling to put itself forward as a political force, for reasons both of guilt for the Nazi past and also, increasingly, fear of the Soviet Union. Stalin's arrangement thus continues to justify itself in the eyes of Soviet leaders.

The complicated emotions and frustrations engendered by this intolerable situation have been mastered by the West Germans far better than was commonly expected in the 1940's. To have demonstrated this is perhaps the chief merit of Laqueur's book. Still, one should not underestimate the long-term influence of a set of attitudes that originated in the 1960's in the Social Democratic party with peo-

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ple like Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr.

On the level of high policy, these attitudes were fairly tried in 1969-75 in the *Ostpolitik* of reconciliation, accommodation, and acceptance of the Soviet-imposed status quo in Europe. After it became clear that accommodation was not going to accomplish the originally stated aims of *Ostpolitik*, namely liberalization in Eastern Europe and rapprochement leading to unification with East Germany, the policy was not abandoned, but transformed into an ideology of appeasement as the only possible way forward. Other options were excluded from debate *ab initio*.

JUST as the political intellectuals in West Germany have remained immune to the neoconservative, neorealist revival elsewhere in Europe and in the U.S., so the politicians and political media have fostered a public temper in which, as Laqueur puts it, "an ostrich-like policy makes it considerably easier to assume that there is not that much to choose between West and East, that there is constant—if slow—change for the better in the Soviet Union, and that, in any case, Russia has a very strong army and should not be given offense." The German historian Hans-Peter Schwarz has put it even more pithily. The rise of appeasement, he says, is "to a large extent an attempt, in view of the decline of American power, to come to terms with the new lord and master."

Laqueur understands these facts very well, although he returns at the end to his general message of guarded optimism. Outside of Bonn and the editorial offices of the major newspapers and television stations, he notes, there is the real West Germany, in which the old industries of the northwest (Germany's "rust belt") are being overtaken by the electronic and service industries and middle-sized businesses of the south, and in which centrist, consensus politics are the order of the day. "There is now not only more freedom in Germany than ever before"—one wonders if the East Germans would agree here—"but also more common sense and moderation. There is a great deal of hypochondria about, but also an essential toughness, an unwillingness to surrender without a major struggle to the threats facing the country at home and abroad. Germany may need these resources in the years to come."

Walter Laqueur has managed to pack a wide array of facts, overviews, and interpretations into a fairly narrow compass. Whatever qualifications one may wish to enter, his "personal report" is a highly valuable, extremely well-written contribution to the category of essential literature for anyone concerned not only with Germany but with European problems in general and with the state and prospects of U.S.-European relations.

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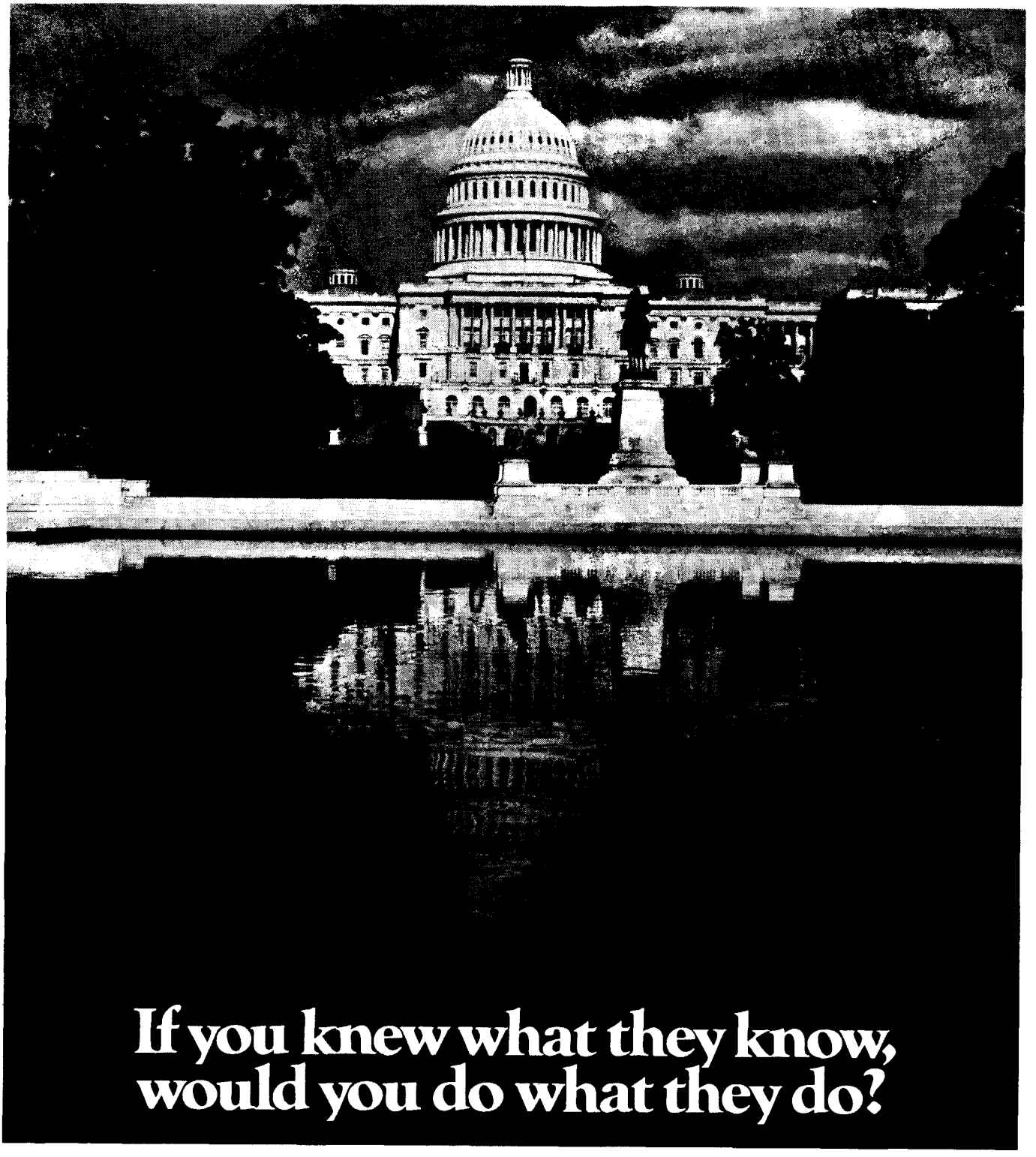

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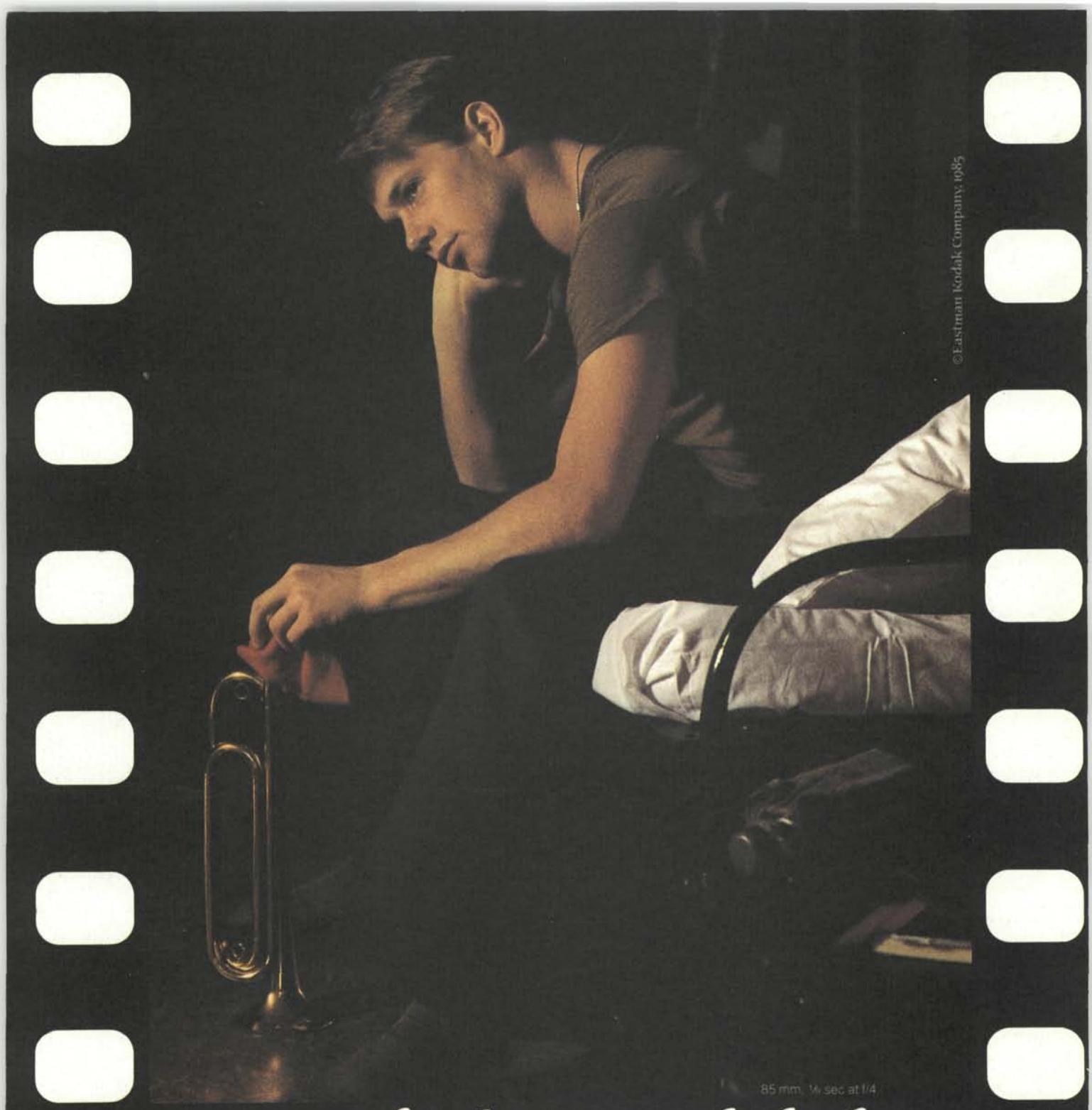

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